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EDF ENERGY London and South of England Media Awards

Kent on Sunday

www.kentnews.co.uk January 31, 2016

North & West edition No 697

TRANSPORT

Tunnel vision

Delight and despair at multi-billion pound lower Thames crossing plan

CRIME

Cops wait on Milly killer confessions

Did Levi Bellfield discuss controversial murders?

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Is building more roads simply a bridge too far?

AS anyone who has the misfortune to regularly use the Dartford Crossing knows only too well, it is rarely the opportunity for the motorist to truly enjoy the delights of the open road.

Well, not unless they get their kicks by sitting side by side hundreds of other people in their cars gnashing their teeth and trying to work out how late they're going to be.

This week alone, we saw a queue stretch back well in excess of 10 miles after an oil spill caused rush hour chaos.

So however much we may flinch at the thought of yet more of our fine countryside being paved over, there is really little debate when it comes to whether there is a need for an additional crossing option.

With the best will in the world to the good folk of Gravesend, it would have been a foolish mission to build another in Dartford.

The town suffers enough as it is - and another oil spill



Editor **Chris Britcher**

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would still cause that teeth gnashing.

But the bigger issue is just how long a new crossing will sustain the relentless growth in the use of our roads - both by cars and the juddering freight which romps across the county to and from the ports.

Because the reality is that in another 10 years we may be already looking at needing another.

And with every major development we lose a little of the green fields we treasure. What's more, they will never return as a consequence.

So while those who live east of Gravesend will need to come up with a remarkable reason, it seems, to get the juggernaut stopped or reversed, we need to guard against believing that more roads are the answer to all our transport ills. The cost to our surroundings is simply too high a price to pay. Read our full report on the plans inside on pages 14-16.



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Cops refuse to comment on Bellfield confessions

By Chris Murphy

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POLICE have refused to comment if serial killer Levi Bellfield is to be investigated over the brutal double killings of Lin and Megan Russell in a quiet Kent village 20 years ago.

Michael Stone, from Gillingham, is serving three life sentences for the crime, but doubts have long lingered over his guilt. He has always claimed he was innocent.

At sentencing he was told he must serve at least 25 years behind bars.

Mrs Russell, 45, had been walking back through fields near her home on a July afternoon with her two children when they were attacked by a man wielding a hammer.

Both she and daughter Megan, 8, were killed, along with the pet dog. Her other daughter, Josie - just nine at the time of the attack - miraculously survived.

Campaigners for Stone's innocence have long suggested Bellfield - who this week admitted responsibility for the rape and murder of Surrey schoolgirl Milly Dowler in 2002 - may be responsible.

He was known to attack with a hammer and bears a resemblance



KILLER: Levi Bellfield this week finally admitted responsibility for killing schoolgirl Milly Dowler

to the photo-fit issued by Kent Police at the time of the Russell murders in Chillenden, near Canterbury.

Kent Police is referring all calls on possible admissions by Bellfield to New Scotland Yard, which is handling the issue.

A Met Police spokesman told us: "We are liaising with a number of other UK police forces in relation to information which has been passed onto us regarding a number of

criminal investigations. That information remains subject to assessment and for that reason we will not be discussing the matter in further detail at this time.

"We are not prepared to discuss at this time the number of investigations or details of any case."

And when asked if Kent was one of those constabularies, the spokesman said: "We are not prepared to discuss that whilst assessment remains ongoing."

Bellfield had always maintained his innocence and refused to give evidence at his trial in the murder of the 13-year-old.

But when police spoke to him recently over claims he had a possible accomplice in the Milly Dowler case, it is understood he admitted to a string of crimes.

Bellfield has already been convicted for the murders of two other young girls and attempted murder of a third.

Our rail firms emerge with lowest satisfaction scores in national study

SOUTHERN and Southeastern - the two rail operators providing services across Kent - have come bottom in the latest rail passenger satisfaction survey.

A survey of more than 28,000 passengers by independent passenger watchdog Transport Focus, found a slight increase in overall satisfaction to 83 per cent in autumn 2015 - up from 81 per cent year-on-year.

But operators with the three lowest ratings were all in the south east, where long-running improvement work at London Bridge station has caused disruption to services.

Thameslink had the lowest proportion of satisfied passengers at 73 per cent, followed by Southeastern (75 per cent) and Southern (78 per cent).

But Southeastern insists it is on the right track and points to year-on-year improvements.

It says the 75 per cent is a one per cent increase on the previous year, and a two-year high.

Managing director David Statham

said: "These latest results indicate that our passengers value the improvements we have been making across our network and it is encouraging to see satisfaction levels have increased on our mainline and high speed trains.

"This aside, we realise there is a great deal more work to do to improve our scores. We are currently part way through a £70m investment programme that has seen us bring in more real time information for passengers, refurbish and deep clean our trains and stations, and provide more employee assistance at stations.

"Our focus is on continuing to make improvements that benefit all our passengers and working closely with Network Rail to improve the punctuality of our trains."

Southeastern's franchise currently runs until 2018. It is widely expected it will face stiff competition to cling on to the right to provide train services in the south east.

Driver dies in fireball after horrific crash on the M20

A FATAL crash on the M20 on Thursday night forced the closure of both lanes of the motorway and after one of the vehicles involved burst into flame, emergency resurfacing work too.

On Friday, police were appealing for witnesses to anyone who saw a Fiat Ducato van collide with a white DAF truck on the London-bound carriageway between

junction four for West Malling and the exit for the M26 at junction three for Wrotham, at around 10.03pm.

The van then caught fire. The driver failed to escape and was declared dead at the scene.

Police had not revealed the identity of the deceased by the time KoS went to press.

Anyone with information, should call 01622 798538.

Work on town centre cinema to get under way in October

A CINEMA chain has joined a regeneration project designed to pump £57 million into transforming Sittingbourne town centre.

And that means work on an eight-screen multiplex from The Light Cinemas could be under way by the end of the year.

The new 24,000 sq ft cinema is planned alongside six new family restaurants as the centrepiece of

the new leisure quarter which will sit between the high street and Sittingbourne train station.

It joins the Spirit of Sittingbourne project - a partnership between property regeneration company U+I, developers Quinn Estates and Swale Borough Council.

Current plans anticipate work on the cinema will start in October with completion set for early 2018.



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Sinkhole filled with concrete as A249 lane open

ONE lane of the Sheppey-bound A249 at Bobbing re-opened on Friday after a water leak and then a sinkhole caused chaos.

Motorists have been left facing big queues at peak times after the road had to be shut.

But now Highways England say the outside lane on the northbound A249 is back in business.

However, it says it is currently unsafe to reopen the slip road and inside lane. Surveys have not confirmed the stability of the ground underneath the road and the adjacent void in the ground is a potential risk to drivers.

The southbound A249 remains open.

Highways chiefs have ordered for the sinkhole to be filled with concrete.



HIT: Peter Andre as conductor

Military band baton picked up by pop star

STUDENTS from a military academy were in for a surprise when pop star turned personality Peter Andre made a surprise appearance to conduct the school band.

A band from the Duke of York's Royal Military School in Dover were performing at The Sun Military Awards, "the Millies", at the Guildhall, London.

As the school military band took position by the red carpet to perform to people leaving the star-studded event, the singer took the baton and led the band for several minutes.

High-profile guests included Rod Stewart, Penny Lancaster, Ian Wright, Susanna Reid, Gaby Roslin and Joey Essex as well as defence secretary and Sevenoaks MP Michael Fallon and mayor of London Boris Johnson, many of whom stopped to chat to the students on the way through to the dinner, honouring the courage and fortitude of Britain's Armed Forces.

Chris Russell, the school's executive principal, said: "Many of our pupils have parents serving in the Armed Forces so the Millies are always of great interest to our school community. Many celebrities stopped to remark on the excellent performance of the band and some were even spotted recording the music on their mobile phones."

Barnes' fury as Whitehall rejects bid to ease Stack burden on Kent taxpayer

By Chris Britcher

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POLICE and crime commissioner Ann Barnes says she has been left "utterly surprised" and "disappointed" after home secretary Theresa May refused to foot the bill for additional costs incurred by Kent Police in dealing with Operation Stack last summer.

A letter was sent in November by Mrs Barnes to the minister for policing, fire, criminal justice and victims, Mike Penning, requesting funding under the Home Office special grant process to reimburse the £576,925 it cost the local taxpayer. But Theresa May has turned it down.

Mrs Barnes said: "Operation Stack is acknowledged as a national problem now, and yet policing services in Kent have been put under strain to deal with it. Local taxpayers should not have to pick up the bill for the inability of others to solve the problem."

"I need to discuss with the Home Office, as a matter of urgency, about



SNUB: Theresa May

how we can take things forward from here to make sure that Kent Police is not left carrying the can in the future.

"It is simply not acceptable to have to routinely divert police resources

to cover Stack and for those extra costs to be borne by the taxpayers in Kent.

"Even this week I saw hundreds of lorries parked up on the M20, thanks to a difficulty in the tunnel and the adverse weather conditions

"This misery has been going on for years and will continue until we get a long-term solution."

But responding to Mrs Barnes' criticism, minister Mike Penning, said: "Police forces should include within their policing and budget plans reasonable contingencies for unexpected events in their areas."

"Special grant funding is usually only available when the additional costs are more than one per cent of the PCC's budget, or where the additional costs might threaten the financial stability of the force."

"At March 31 2015, the Kent PCC had £34.4m in resource reserves, which increased by more than ten per cent last year."

Additional costs for Stack represented 0.2 per cent of the force's annual budget, the Home Office said.

Hotel owner named in Debrett's 500 list

OWNER of Ramsgate's Albion House Hotel, Gay Haines, has been named in the latest Debrett's 500 list - a rundown of the most influential people in Britain.

She is the co-founder of executive search firm Grace Blue which specialises in placing the top creative talent into the top advertising companies with offices around the world.

Her inclusion in the list sees her make a little history too. She is the first headhunter in the advertising, marketing and PR category to be included.

She bought the Albion Hotel in 2014 and put it into the hands of husband and wife management team Ben and Emma Irvine who opened it for business at the end of 2015.

It appeared on an episode of Channel 5's Hotel Inspector, and has since become one of Thanet's most popular hotels.

Debretts said of her entry: "Haines is the most important connection for the most connected."

Are CCTV cameras still cutting crime?

A CONSULTATION has been launched into CCTV cameras in Swale - in a bid to ensure they are positioned in the correct places to crack down on crime and antisocial behaviour (ASB).

There are currently 84 CCTV cameras in operation across Sittingbourne, Faversham, Sheppey and surrounding villages, and the local council has a legal duty to make sure they are effective.

Explains Ken Pugh, cabinet member for community safety at the council: "Whilst the vast majority are effective, a significant number may no longer be performing a useful role."

"This could be because crime overall has fallen in the borough, or the issue they were put up to address no longer exists. In order to justify the legal need to keep these cameras, we are consulting with local people, businesses, parish councils and other groups to ask their views on the effectiveness of particular cameras."

The consultation will be open until March 31 and the questionnaire for response is available at www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/swalecctv.

Hundreds of lorries moved on by cops

A MAJOR crack down on illegally and unsafe parked lorries have seen nearly 450 moved on in the last two weeks alone.

Between January 8 and 21, police officers and Highways England officials moved on a total of 447 lorries found to be parked inappropriately.

Locations where HGVs were moved on include junctions eight, 11 and 13 of the M20, the A20 at Capel-le Ferne, the A2 near Canterbury, and Farthing Corner on the M2. Fixed penalty notices were issued to 37 vehicles.

It is the latest enforcement by Kent Police and Highways England and forms part of a wider multi-agency approach to dealing with the broader issue of unsafe, illegal and antisocial HGV parking.

Superintendent Ian Hall, from Kent Police said: "Parking on the hard shoulder and slip roads of busy carriageways for a rest is unsafe and illegal and it puts drivers and other road users in danger."

"Kent Police and its partners are taking a zero-tolerance approach to this kind of behaviour by lorry drivers."

Council denies it suppressed damning Dreamland report

By Chris Britcher

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THANET District Council has hit back at claims it deliberately sat on a report which warned of the financial risks associated with re-opening Dreamland.

It comes after a former councillor revealed details of a report by commercial property advisors GVA, in February 2015, over the awarding of the contract to run the re-imagined theme park on the seafront.

In the report, it describes the project as having a "substantial risk profile", that the "risk outweighs the benefits" and said "there is considerable risk associated with the viability of a scheme of this nature particularly in a secondary/ tertiary coastal location".

It prompted former Labour and Green Party councillor Ian Driver, who lost his seat at the local elections last May, to accuse the council of burying the report.

It follows news at the end of last year that the firm operating Dreamland, Sands Heritage Ltd, had run up debts of £2.9m and had to strike a compulsory voluntary arrangement (CVA) with creditors.

Mr Driver said: "What has happened here is utterly astounding. Top council bosses were in possession of, or knew about, a report from a large reputable firm of commercial property



ROW: Firm running Dreamland park found itself running up debts of £2.9m

developers warning of the high risk of the Dreamland project failing. Instead of acting on the warnings and working to develop contingency plans to secure the project, the report was kept secret from councillors.

But the council insists it has done nothing wrong. In a statement, it said: "We quite rightly sought independent opinion on the selection process for the operator of the Dreamland amusement park. This is a standard process for the council.

"The report was not published by the

council as it is a commercially sensitive document. The extract released, which confirms the complexities and risks of a unique project of this scale, is something that has been acknowledged by the council and its partners throughout.

"The council is perfectly satisfied in following its due process and adopted the recommendations of the report. Extracting comments from a report and taking them out of context is inappropriate and misleading."

Eatery is No 1 in Top 50 Gastropubs list

THE Sportsman in Seasalter has once again been named number one in the Top 50 Gastropubs of the year list.

The 2016 edition, compiled by trade title The Publican's Morning Advertiser, put the Whitstable eatery at the top and one of only two Kent entries to make the prestigious countdown.

The other was Bidborough's the Kentish Hare which came in at number 33.

Warning over bogus blue badge websites

TRADING Standards chiefs are warning of websites offering bogus blue badges.

It says it has received reports of websites charging £49 for a badge - and asking for a host of personal information. They should only cost £10 and are only available by contacting Kent County Council.

Dickens house boost

MEDWAY Council says work to restore Rochester's famous Charles Dickens museum will resume this spring.

Eastgate House featured in Dickens' written works The Pickwick Papers and The Mystery of Edwin Drood.

It is expected works on the 16th century townhouse will be complete this year.

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Partner of EastEnders star says he'll not fight extradition

THE boyfriend of ex-EastEnders actress Sian Blake has agreed to return to the UK where he is suspected of killing her and their two children.

Arthur Simpson-Kent, 48, appeared at court in Accra, Ghana, on Tuesday and said he would not fight extradition back to Britain.

The hairdresser left the UK days after Ms Blake and their two sons Zachary, eight, and four-year-old Amon were reported missing.

They were last seen on December 13, and were found buried in the back garden of the family's home in Erith on January 5.

Police had spoken to Simpson-Kent at the house on December 16, and returned two days later to find the property empty. He arrived in Ghana the following day, and was



arrested on January 9.

Scotland Yard is under investigation by the police watchdog for the way it handled the missing persons inquiry, and why it took more than three weeks to find the bodies of Ms

Blake and her sons.

Ms Blake, pictured above, played Frankie Pierre in 56 episodes of EastEnders between 1996 and 1997. She was suffering from motor neurone disease before she died.

Resignation at G4S centre after high-level pressure

THE director of a G4S-run facility for young inmates which is at the centre of abuse and mistreatment allegations is stepping down following criticism of its management.

Ralph Marchant is standing down with immediate effect at Medway Secure Training Centre in Rochester, but will remain employed by the private security firm.

It is understood there are no allegations relating to the conduct of Mr Marchant, who is being replaced on an interim basis by Ben Saunders - the director of the immigration removal centres at Gatwick.

The development came after chief inspector of prisons, Nick Hardwick, said managerial oversight had failed to protect young people at the centre for

inmates aged 12 to 17.

Inspectors have "significant concerns" about the facility following allegations of abuse and mistreatment of youngsters aired on the BBC's Panorama programme this month.

An undercover reporter captured footage showing staff mistreating and abusing inmates, and boasting about using inappropriate techniques to restrain youngsters.

Other allegations included claims that staff tried to hide their actions by ensuring they were beneath CCTV cameras or in areas not covered by them.

Justice secretary Michael Gove announced the appointment of an independent improvement board to provide "increased oversight" at Medway and for G4S to put in place an improvement plan.

Kent Foundation chair

JULIAN Kirkness has been appointed chairman of county charity the Kent Foundation.

The software developer has been a supporter of the organisation since 2013 and became vice chairman last year. He replaces Allan Mowatt after 20 years.

Bake Off judge cashes in

GREAT British Bake Off judge Paul Hollywood is set to see his salary as a judge on the hit TV show rise to £600,000.

The Wingham baker has been an integral of the show's success. Last year's final was the highest rated show of the year. The BBC refused to comment on the reports.

Stack consultation ends

A CONSULTATION into plans to solve the problems of Operation Stack ended on Tuesday night after highways chiefs were forced to extend the deadline by 24 hours.

It follows a problem with the software used online to gather responses.

Plans include a lorry park at Stanford.

Watch out for bogus BT

FRAUDSTERS claiming to work for BT are scamming people in the county out of hundreds of pounds, Trading Standards has warned.

The bogus caller asks for up upfront fee of £300 to provide an opt-out service for spam calls.

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Top Three Stories



1. Burglaries down 21%

West Kent figures down since October

2. LED street light contract

Changes will save us £5.2m a year

3. Skills shortage fears

Worrying construction industry figures

The Essential Guide:



...to the proposed crossing

Everything you need to know about the new crossing, including public exhibition dates



FEATURED PHOTO GALLERY: See the recently-refurbished Assembly Hall Theatre in Tunbridge Wells, which this week hosted the launch of a town centre management scheme.

Missed last week's...?

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Top Three Blogs



1. Lottery winnings

What would you do if you won the jackpot?

2. I love Don't Tell the Bride

Confessions of a guilty pleasure

3. Lorry lane needed

Why HGVs cause nightmare commutes

Results of the KoS Online Poll

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- 3 Undecided - 1%
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Dad's Army fans nervously wait for classic's big screen revival

First reviews are somewhat mixed, but for one Maidstone group the return of the bumbling platoon is significant, amid considerable fears it will fall short of the original. **Chris Murphy** finds out why

A CLUB devoted to creating short films in the style of the classic Dad's Army sitcom, says it is nervously awaiting the release next weekend of the big screen return of the nation's much loved Walmington-on-Sea platoon.

Dad's Army, the 2016 movie version, features a host of big names recreating classic comedy characters such as Captain Mainwaring, Sgt Wilson, Corporal Jones and Privates Frazer, Walker, Godfrey and Pike.

But fans of the ever-green BBC comedy – repeats of which continue to be shown at prime time on BBC2 – continue to ponder the merits of bringing back characters so synonymous with the actors who originally portrayed them.

Colin Taylor is the chairman of the Barmy Army Film Club, based in Maidstone, which makes its own Dad's Army-style films.

He feels a particular affection with the show having grown up in Ramsgate, where his family were friends with the late, great John Le Mesurier, who played Sgt Wilson.

He told KoS this week: "The new film is basically a tribute to Dad's Army – it is never going to replace it.

"They have tinkered with it, changing some of the characters and bringing others back.

"For example, Walker who left the platoon very early on in the series. The actor James Beck died but the character was written out of the programme – saying he went to London and never came back. This film is set in 1944 and all of a sudden, he has reappeared.

"Also, Godfrey in the original series is a conscientious objector and wouldn't bear weapons. In the film, he is seen carrying a gun.

"It will be interesting. They have got some brilliant actors on board includ-



REBORN: The Walmington-on-Sea Home Guard as they are in the new film, left, and the original classic line-up from the much-loved TV show, right

ing some big Hollywood names. But it will still be very difficult to reproduce the original."

Starring in the new version are the likes of Toby Jones as Mainwaring, Bill Nighy as Wilson, Michael Gambon as Godfrey, Inbetweeners' Blake Harrison as Pike and Bill Paterson as Frazer.

Adds Mr Taylor: "I don't doubt the expectation of the fans is particularly high. A lot of them are still saying 'why are they doing this?'.

"I guess it is because Dad's Army was such a favourite. It still has such a large fan base that I do hope it gives something to the fans.

"It will certainly bring back memories but there will be a lot of comparisons made. People will be looking at the new actors and compare them to the originals.

"It was such a brilliant series, to try and reboot it now after all these years is very odd.

"I'm sure the film company will make a few bob out of it, though."

The new film also features Catherine Zeta Jones – who shot to fame in ITV's Darling Buds of May, much of which

was filmed on location in Pluckley, near Ashford.

Adds Mr Taylor: "The way we look at this at the film club, and we have been doing this for 25 years, is we have never tried to play this Walmington-on-Sea platoon.

"We decided very early on that we would be the next platoon along. We have had original characters in our films. We have had the vicar who played the vicar in one of our films. And Mrs Fox, played by Pamela Cundell, was in The Wooden Wonder. We also had Colin Bean who played [regular background platoon member] Private Sponge – who is also the godfather to my son."

And no matter what the new movie brings, it will never shake his devotion to the original.

He added: "Dad's Army has gone through my life. I'm a fan for life."

As for the film itself, the plot is believed to surround a spy in the Dover area. But despite being central to the plot, all the filming was conducted in Yorkshire, a decision, the Kent Film Office explained, was down to budget concerns.



The 'White Cliffs' featured in the movie was actually Flamborough Head in East Riding, Yorkshire.

■ To buy a Barmy Army show for

charity, visit www.barmyarmy-filmclub.com

Dad's Army is released nationwide on February 5.

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FEW comedies have proved quite so timeless as Dad's Army.

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Its masterstroke was using a host of highly respected actors in the twilight of their careers and giving them what would become the roles for which they would be most remembered.

Only Ian Lavender from the original platoon survives. He was just 22 when he was cast as Private Pike. In fact he is one of just two surviving main cast members – a dubious honour he shares with Frank Williams, who played the

Vicar, the Rev Timothy Farthing, who is now 84.

Remarkably, despite the age of many of the cast members, it was James Beck – who played spiv Private Walker – who died during the show's life. He passed away during filming of the sixth series in 1973, and only appears in on-location shots. He was just 44.

The show ran over nine series and 80 episodes in total and spawned a host of spin-offs, including radio shows and a stage production, all of which featured the original cast.

In 1971 Dad's Army was also turned into a major film featuring the regular cast.

Trust is cleared as case collapses

A landmark court case which saw an NHS trust which runs two major Kent hospitals facing corporate manslaughter charges is thrown out by the judge, clearing the trust and a consultant anaesthetist

By David Wilcock
editorial@kosmedia.co.uk

THE first NHS trust to be charged with corporate manslaughter has admitted "aspects of care fell short" after the trial over the death of a woman hours after giving birth, dramatically collapsed.

The judge ordered the jury to find the Maidstone and Tunbridge Wells NHS Trust not guilty over the death of schoolteacher Frances Cappuccini, 30, in the landmark case.

Locum consultant anaesthetist Errol Cornish, 68, from Bromley, was accused of gross negligence manslaughter over his role in the care of the mother-of-two, who died after postnatal surgery at Tunbridge Wells Hospital at Pembury, in October 2012.

Judge Mr Justice Coulson instructed the jury at Inner London Crown Court to acquit both defendants on Thursday, just over two weeks into their trial, having ruled on Wednesday that they had no case to answer.

In his ruling, he praised the Cappuccini family's "dignity" during the trial and said: "There is no question that Frances Cappuccini should not have died at the trust hospital on October 9.

"It's inevitable that her family will want to know why she died and hold someone to account."

But the judge outlined a series of flaws in the prosecution case, including evidence that showed some of locum Dr Cornish's actions had been "about as far from a gross negligence manslaughter case as it is possible to be". He also branded some of the arguments against the trust as "perverse".

In a statement released through the Medical Protection Society, Dr Cornish said: "I am relieved with the court's verdict. I would like to thank my family, friends, legal team and all those who supported me through this difficult time.

"I would like to pay tribute to the family of Mrs Cappuccini for the restraint and dignity they have displayed throughout this trial."

His lawyer Ian Stern QC highlighted the fact the judge had ruled Dr Cornish did not breach his duty of care, and "at the time he left Frances Cappuccini after his short involvement there was no evidence to support the prosecution assertion that she was dying".



TRAGIC: Frances Cappuccini died just hours after giving birth to her son

He also said Dr Cornish had had an "extremely impressive career".

In a statement, the health trust said: "Patient safety remains of paramount importance and it has been shown during the trial that a number of compassionate and highly skilled clinical teams were involved in caring for Frances.

"The trust has, however, recognised from the start that there were aspects of Frances' care that fell short of the standards that the trust would expect and they have already apologised to the family for this.

"No outcome from these proceedings could bring any consolation to the family.

"The allegation of corporate manslaughter has been consistently denied by the trust and now also comprehensively rejected by the court.

"The trust regrets that the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) saw fit to pursue the charge in the first place, given the additional stress this will have caused all involved."

The CPS, which brought the case, now faces a hefty legal bill after lawyers for the trust and Dr Cornish indicted they may seek to have their costs paid for by the prosecution.

A CPS spokeswoman said: "The prosecution has carefully considered the judgment and decided not to appeal his decision.

"We appreciate that Mrs Cappuccini's family will be understandably upset by this outcome, but we respect the decision made by the judge that there was insufficient evidence to continue with the trial."

Mrs Cappuccini's widower Tom, who had attended court throughout the trial, was not present as the foreman of the jury of 10 women and two men returned formal not guilty verdicts on the order of the judge.

Mr Justice Coulson told them that he had agreed with arguments from the defence barristers that neither had a case to answer.

He said: "On my direction, as a matter of law, both defendants are not guilty."

Mrs Cappuccini lost more than two litres (around four pints) of blood after her second son Giacomo was born by caesarean section at the hospital.

She was subsequently operated on for a postpartum haemorrhage, but never woke up from the anaesthetic.



CLEARED: Left, Glenn Douglas, CEO of NHS trust and, right, Errol Cornish

She went into cardiac arrest just over three hours after the operation had finished on October 9 2012, and died at 4.20pm.

The trial heard that a second anaesthetist, Dr Nadeem Azeez, 53, was primarily responsible for Mrs Cappuccini's care, but did not face a trial alongside them because he had returned to his native Pakistan.

Dr Cornish and Dr Azeez were accused of serious failings of care that led to the death of Mrs Cappuccini just hours after she gave birth.

The prosecution had alleged that Dr Azeez, 53, committed a catalogue of "very great failures" which left Mrs Cappuccini unable to breathe properly for some time after surgery and led, eventually, to her death.

South African Dr Cornish, 68, who once worked as a registrar for heart transplant pioneer Dr Christiaan Barnard in his native land, was accused of failing to improve the situation after being called to oversee the more junior man.

The jury was told that Mrs Cappuccini was "intubated" during surgery - an invasive procedure which involves placing a tube down the throat and controlling breathing with a ventilator - but Dr Azeez later removed it as he tried to bring her round.

The prosecution claimed she showed signs of struggling to breathe independently and Dr Azeez should have reintubated her and called for help from a more senior medic.

Dr Azeez is believed to be in his native Pakistan, which does not have a formal extradition treaty with the UK.

Mr Price also alleged that Dr Cornish, who came to assist Dr Azeez for a maximum spell of 40 minutes in the midst of several hours of treatment, failed to take steps to improve her condition by immediately taking steps to reintubate her when he came in. This, he claimed was a gross breach of his duty of care to the patient.

Philip Hopkins, a professor of anaesthesia at the University of Leeds, who produced a prosecution report on Mrs Cappuccini's treatment, told the jury that when Dr Cornish arrived in the operating theatre "it was still a recoverable situation", adding: "His seniority compounded the failings - it makes them worse."

But Mr Justice Coulson said the prosecution had failed to prove Mrs

Cappuccini was critically ill and needed intubating, criticising Prof Hopkins for lacking evidence to back up his claims.

The judge said the evidence showed that both doctors had been following established guidelines for post-operative care and Dr Cornish had also notified intensive care after coming to assist, leading to more senior anaesthetists arriving.

Additionally Dr Garth Sommerville, the senior consultant anaesthetist who took over from Dr Azeez and Dr Cornish, told the jury that when he arrived he did not reintubate Mrs Cappuccini either.

The judge said: "Cornish did not ignore the advice of others and he also immediately sought other help. It's as far from a gross negligence manslaughter case as it is possible to be.

"There is no evidence that there was an error of judgment at all, let alone one that was dangerous."

The prosecution had alleged that if one or both doctors was found to be grossly negligent, causing the death of Mrs Cappuccini, the trust can be said to have employed someone they knew or should have known was not suitably qualified or trained for their role.

The prosecution alleged that the NHS trust employed Dr Azeez as a "specialty doctor" despite the fact that he lacked British qualifications and employed Dr Cornish as a locum without an interview.

They also claimed that there were problems with the way Dr Azeez had been appraised.

But Mr Justice Coulson said Dr Azeez's four years' experience as a GP in the Punjab and six years working in a hospital in Lahore, plus 18 months at a London hospital, meant he had more than enough experience.

Dr Cornish was entitled to be appointed without an interview, the judge added, given that he had worked for the hospital as a locum several times previously, and was in its "bank" of trusted freelancers.

He said: "The trust was perfectly entitled to use his previous experience to employ him again.

"Cornish has, on the face of it, had an extremely impressive career; this includes working as a registrar under Dr Christiaan Barnard in South Africa."





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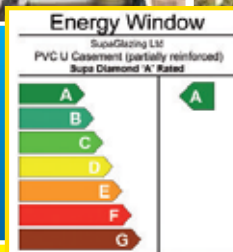
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As Option C gets the nod – does Gravesend have a Plan B?

In the end there were only two options for a new lower Thames crossing – Dartford or a site just east of Gravesend – and now Highways England has thrown its backing behind the latter what's next for those left in the path of the new route?

By Luke May

luke.may@archant.co.uk

IN DARTFORD, the sound of Champagne corks popping was almost as loud as the sigh of dismay from neighbours in Gravesend.

Yet the decision to push ahead with proposals to build a lower Thames crossing east of the town will, in truth, have come as a surprise to few.

With just two options on the table – Option A for Dartford and C for Gravesend (B, cutting through Swanscombe, was ditched very early on amid concerns it would kick the London Paramout Resort plans into touch) – both sides have been waging a propaganda war for months.

While no final decision on the multi-billion pound scheme will be confirmed by the government until the end of the year, the proposed scheme would run from the end of the M2, crossing the river just east of Gravesend and Tilbury and joining the M25 between junctions 29 and 30.

It will be the first new crossing of the Thames east of London since the Queen Elizabeth II Bridge opened at Dartford 25 years ago.

Highways England senior project manager, Martin Potts explained: "Deciding where the new crossing should go is a vitally important decision, and we've been working hard to identify solutions that strike the best balance between improving journeys, getting value for money and managing environmental impact.

"Our assessments have shown that Option C provides double the economic benefits of Option A as well as a clear alternative route to the Dartford Crossing, reducing congestion and improving resilience of the road network. And by choosing a tunnel rather than a bridge we can minimise the effects of the new road on the environment."

Putting another crossing at Dartford – an area already so frequently crippled by traffic jams and suffering from pollution levels as a result of the constant waves of vehicles aiming to be siphoned into and out of Essex – was always going to be a tough sell.

Diverting traffic way from that M25 pinch point was always going to get an easier ride.

Just try telling that to the villagers for whom quiet countryside is soon to become dense highway.

John Bugg is vice-chairman of Shorne Parish Council. It is expected the road leading to tunnels bored under the Thames, will cut just

east of the village. He said: "We are shocked and dismayed by the proposals.

"The preferred route indicated cuts a swathe through some of the most beautiful parts of our historic village, destroying hoes, ancient woodland, farmland and bringing noise and pollution to this unspoilt part of Kent.

"We intend to vigorously oppose this move and will do everything in our power to persuade government not to choose Option C."

They certainly face a tough challenge. Kent County Council is supportive of the option. Plus it does actually seem to offer a partial solution to the current crush at Dartford.

But fight they will.

Kent County Council Green Party councillor, Martin Whybrow, said his party were "dismayed" at the proposals: "Kent has some of the highest air pollution levels in the country, and developing further road networks does nothing to counter this.

"With air pollution in Kent responsible for hundreds of deaths every year, it's time to stop pouring money into more polluting roads. We need cleaner, sustainable travel options that move people and freight away from vehicles, for the sake of people's health and the sake of our environment"

John Cubitt is the Conservative leader of Gravesham council. He said: "I'm disappointed with the announcement. We're still left somewhat unsure as government are saying they are still considering Option A from Dartford [in a politically shrewd move, that option is not completely off the table, no doubt to prevent anyone from directly accusing Highways England of a fait accompli].

"The A2 and M2 are already running at capacity with the current levels of traffic," adds Cllr Cubitt, "which has nothing to do with traffic at the Dartford crossing."

Gravesham's Tory MP Adam Holloway was also left less than impressed and suggested the solution should be in Dartford.

He said: "The traffic from Essex to Kent is free flowing, that problem has been solved following the removal of the toll booths last year.

"The problem is a tunnel heading from south to north, the one way to solve the problem at the Dartford Crossing is to build a bridge that lifts traffic over a tunnel for local traffic."

So just what happens now?

An eight-week consultation is now under way – concluding on Thursday, March 24.

It will provide the opportunity for residents and businesses to provide feedback on the proposals.

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THE FUTURE?: A computer-generated view of what a new Thames crossing to the east of Gravesend could look like. What do you think?

In addition, there will be 24 public exhibitions in both Kent and Essex where comments can be taken face-to-face. The first of which is in Gravesend on February 4 (see box).

Adds Martin Potts from Highways England: "This consultation is your chance to have your say on a once-in-a-generation, multi-billion pound investment that will have wide ranging effects for decades. I encourage anyone who would like to find out more to check out the consultation materials or come and see us at one of the public exhibitions we'll be hosting."

Roads minister Andrew Jones explained: "The government is committed to delivering a lower Thames crossing which will increase capacity and provide better, faster journeys across the Thames."

"Once complete it could add over £7bn to the economy by increasing investment and business opportunities, and create over 5,000 new jobs nationally."

For Dartford, the relief was clear. It may not be completely out of the woods yet, but the light at the end of the tunnel is now clearly

daylight rather than oncoming traffic.

Says Dartford's Conservative MP Gareth Johnson: "This is great news – I am now confident Dartford will not get another crossing."

"We cannot accommodate another river crossing and we have worked hard to show Highways England that Dartford is not a viable option."

"Option C is the only credible route which will be of benefit to all motorists as it offers an alternative route. It will also tackle the huge problems that exist with pollution in the area

BUSINESS VIEW

BUSINESS chiefs are calling on firms in the county to ensure they get actively involved in the consultation process to ensure concerns are lodged with the government.

But the head of one of the county's biggest business organisations says it supports proposals to push ahead with the Gravesend option, believing it will deliver the most commercial benefits.

Kent's chairman of the South East Local Enterprise Partnership board, Geoff Miles, said: "It is vital we get the broadest possible evidence from businesses about how the current Dartford crossing impacts their day-to-day operations so we can present a strong case to ministers and civil servants at Whitehall."

"A new crossing is vital to keeping traffic flowing between the two counties, supporting the growth of ports, but also stimulating the economies of Kent and Essex."

SELEP member and chief executive of Kent's Invicta Chamber, Jo James, added: "As a chamber representing more than 1,400 Kent businesses we are actively supporting Option C."

"It would improve our connectivity to Europe and competitiveness, and at the same time regenerate an overlooked part of southern England."

around Dartford and so I hope it will be built as speedily as possible.

"In the consultation report, it states that Option A, the route identified at Dartford 'does not provide an alternative route, traffic would still be funnelled through the existing corridor from junctions 2 to 29 and incidents at Dartford would potentially still cause long delays and severe congestion on local roads'."

Rural campaign group the Campaign to Pro-

Continued on page 16

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ROUTES: Left are all potential routes being considered in the consultation and (right) Highways England's proposed route

Continued from page 15

protect Rural England (CPRE) are opposed to both options.

Chairman of CPRE Dartford and Gravesham, Alex Hills, said: "We fear this will destroy ancient woodland, destroy important wildlife habitats which are home to protected species and destroy productive farmland, needed to feed our growing population."

"It will ruin the beautiful landscapes and panoramic views which make Gravesham so special."

"The crossing itself would not cause all the damage. It is the approach road and the new transport corridor it would create

that would be so environmentally damaging. Option C could mean the loss of all the open land between Gravesham and Medway changing the character of Gravesham for ever."

Anti-Option C campaign group Abridge2far has refused to give up following the reports, but has claimed the recommendation will "sentence thousands to misery".

Bob Lane from the group said: "We are very disappointed the government and Highways England have decided to ignore the views of the majority of people during the previous consultation in 2013 who said that they preferred Dartford

as the site of the new crossing.

"They have decided to opt for the most expensive, most destructive option, which will not address the problems at Dartford, but will sentence thousands of people on both sides of the river to misery and pollution."

"Abridge2far does not accept that the battle is over, we cannot see how the government can justify spending £5 billion on a crossing east of Gravesham, when a bridge at Dartford would only cost a quarter of that, and the tolls at Dartford would repay the cost of the bridge in 25 years."

For consultation details, visit www.lower-thames-crossing.co.uk

CONSULTATION EXHIBITION DATES AND VENUES

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Cascade Leisure Centre,
Thong Lane, Gravesend,
DA12 4LG

February 5

11am - 7pm
Riverside Community
Hall, Dickens Road,
Gravesend, DA12 2JY

February 6

10.30am - 4pm
Shorne Village Hall, 16
The Street, Shorne,
DA12 3EA

February 12

11am - 7pm
Gravesham Council Civic
Centre, Windmill Street,
Gravesend, DA12 1AU

February 13

10.30am - 4pm
Gravesham Council Civic
Centre, Windmill Street,
Gravesend, DA12 1AU

February 19

12.30pm - 9pm
Bluewater Shopping
Centre, Bluewater Pkwy,
Greenhithe, DA9 9ST

February 20

10.30am - 4pm
Bluewater Shopping
Centre, Bluewater Pkwy,

Greenhithe, DA9 9ST

February 22

11am - 7pm
Hurst Community Centre,
Hurst Place, Hurst Road,
Bexley, DA5 3LH

February 23

11am - 7pm
Eastgate Events Venue,
Eastgate, 141 Springhead
Parkway, Northfleet,
DA11 8AD

February 26

11am - 7pm
Temple Hill Community
Centre, Temple Hill
Square, Dartford,
DA1 5HY

February 27

10.30am - 4pm
Orchard Shopping
Centre, High Street,
Dartford, DA1 1DN

March 7

11am - 7pm
Kent County Council
Offices, Maidstone House,
King Street, Maidstone,
ME15 6JQ

March 8

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Northgate, Rochester,
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Visit our website

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Join us at one of our events - members of our team will be on hand to answer your questions.

View the proposals - copies of consultation materials, maps and questionnaires are available at locations in your area.

Call us on 0300 123 5000 for details.

The consultation will close on Thursday 24 March 2016.



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How giants of the deep flounder on our beaches so far from home



LOST: This magnificent sperm whale was washed up on the beach of Pegwell Bay in the spring of 2011 while a minke whale was found in Birchington, right top, and a young female humpback was found floating off the coast and towed into Sheerness

Following the sad sight of five huge whales washed up on the beaches in Norfolk and Lincolnshire, we ask why Kent has seen so many magnificent sea creatures wash up on our coastline over the years

By Chris Murphy
editorial@kosmedia.co.uk

WHEN five mighty sperm whales washed up on the beaches along the east coast this week, it sparked a major debate into just what caused these magnificent creatures to meet such unusual ends.

And Kent has certainly seen more than its fair share of whales wash up on its beaches - most frequently along the Thanet and north Kent coast as whales used to feeding in the deep waters of the North Sea find themselves lost and confused and in deadly danger.

In recent years there was a sperm whale washed up at Pegwell Bay, a minke whale in Birchington, and a young humpback found dead off the coast of Grain and towed into Sheerness. In just October, a 35ft minke was washed up in Cliftonville near Margate.

What's more, it was almost exactly ten years ago that the nation was transfixed by what became known as the 'Thames whale' which found itself lost and swimming through central London - attracting thousands to peer from bridges at the northern bottleneck.

A dramatic effort to rescue the creature saw it towed along the Kent coast in a bid to release it in the North Sea, but the strain saw it die just outside Gravesend.

So just why do these animals so often find themselves stranded on our beaches?

kentnews.co.uk kent-life.co.uk

RECENT TRAGEDIES



A FIFTH whale washed up on the east coast of the country on Monday, near to where four others have been found since last Friday.

The sperm whale is believed to be from the same pod as those found in Hunstanton, Norfolk, and Skegness, Lincolnshire, on Friday and over the weekend.

The fifth whale was discovered on Monday in Wainfleet, five miles from Skegness.

Graffiti has been sprayed on the bodies of two of the whales on the beach near Gibraltar Point in Skegness. Messages reading

"Fukushima RIP", "CND" and "man's fault" have been written in white lettering on the bodies of the whales.

The dead animals are believed to have been part of a group of six spotted in The Wash last Friday.

The pod has been linked to 12 whales that stranded and died in the Netherlands and Germany earlier this month.

Richard Johnson of the UK Coastguard said: "We believe that the three whales at Skegness died at sea and then washed ashore."

Divers Marine Life Rescue.

Mr Deaville told us: "The Thames whale was significant because it was the first time in the world it had happened like this. There was an extraordinary reaction from the public at the time who were there or watched on TV.

North & West

At one point we were a mile away from shore and could still hear the crowds cheering us on.

"We are learning more and more about strandings of these species. We were able to recover samples from the whales while they are alive and after they have died.

"Sadly, one thing that does stand out is that if the Thames whale was to return or a similar species, we would preferentially use euthanasia, to be honest.

"We learned that the whale was extremely compromised. They are deep sea feeders and feed on a species of squid which is found below 1,000 metres.

"This means they can't feed in the North Sea, and if they can't feed, they become dehydrated and there is a big knock-on effect. That means euthanasia on welfare grounds would be better than to try and effect a float-and-rescue like we did 10 years ago.

"Towing it back to its native waters off north east Scotland was not practical. It would have taken days to get there but which point the animal would have died.

"We did intend to take it back out to waters in the southern North Sea and release it to give it a chance to get back.

"Since then, we have seen many other strandings and all have been similarly compromised. We have had quite a few on the north Kent coastline.

"If you look at the shape of the North Sea, it is like a funnel narrowing down to a bottleneck between Dover and Calais, which is also the world's busiest shipping lane, and would be very noisy for whales. They can simply get lost

and end up on beaches. It is a pinch point.

"We have seen some humpback whales becoming stranded, and in a way this is a good thing, because it means there are more of them out there since we ended commercial whaling a few years ago. It is not good for the individual that is stranded, but might be evidence of a healthier population out there.

"It is important to understand it is not always terrible news for the species when one becomes stranded."

As for why whales in larger numbers have started to head south in to the English Channel and the Kent area, Mr Deaville is puzzled.

He said: "That is the six million dollar question. We don't know. We are trying to separate the natural and unnatural strandings. It is hard to know why they are entering the North Sea in the first place."

As for the historic suggestions that some whales deliberately beach themselves because they know their life is naturally coming to an end, Mr Deaville is sceptical.

He told us: "I think that is an anthropomorphic interpretation. Science has moved on from those sorts of ideas.

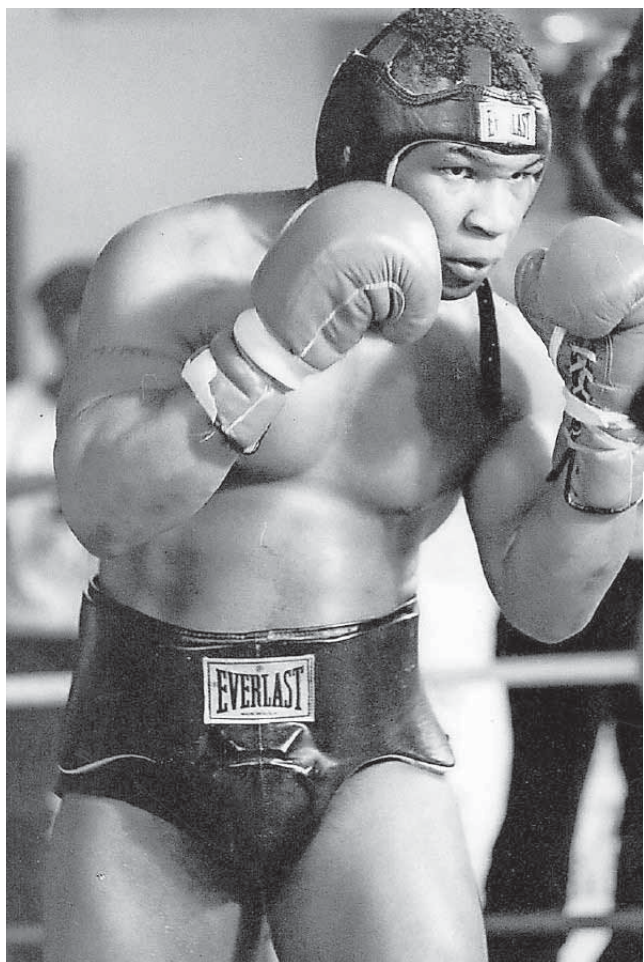
"There are lots of drivers for stranding events, but suicide or angst is not one of them."

If you happen to spot a whale come ashore, it is important the alert the science team.

Mr Deaville is appealing to people to phone 0800 652 0333 and give location details.

He said: "We do depend on the public to report strandings."

Week ending January 31, 2016 19



FIGHTER: Mike Tyson set the boxing world on fire when he burst on scene

Author swings a hook at fall of boxing's best

Book charts history of boxing's premier title but bemoans how different belts have diluted the impact of the champs

By Tom Pyman

tom.pyman@archant.co.uk

AN AUTHOR who once sparred alongside a contender for the heavyweight boxing championship of the world, says he is growing increasingly concerned about the dilution of the once mighty sport

Anton Shapiro, 76, who has spent the last 20 years living in Canterbury, has penned *Chasing the Undisputed Crown* – published on Friday – which explores the history of the sport, from its gritty, illegal bouts of the late 1800s to the bright-light spectacle it has become today.

That, though, is a source of shame for Mr Shapiro, who believes boxing associations are to blame for muddying the waters of the sport.

He believes where there can be more than one title holder in the same weight category it devalues the title of 'heavyweight champion of the world' which so many young men grew up aspiring to be.

He told KoS: "I wanted to recognise a number of worthy champions but I also wanted to pinpoint the disservice that is currently being done to the sport.

"Tyson Fury's victory [over Wladimir Klitschko in November] was a phenomenal achievement but if you looked in the paper or on TV or online, it barely got any coverage, it was buried beneath football, tennis and cricket stories.

"A few decades ago, being crowned a champion would have been front page news and it's a real shame.

"I don't think this demise is a particularly modern phenomenon, it's been brewing over time, and that was the real inspiration behind writing the book - to protest and speak out against what boxing has become."

Chasing the Undisputed Crown is a comprehensive history of the sport, following the bare knuckle brawls of John L Sullivan through to Jack Johnson, whose attempt to break the racial barriers ended in riots, via tales of Joe Louis, Mike Tyson and, of course, Muhammad Ali.

"It was really interesting to investi-

gate the lives of some of these fighters who had a really tough time of it in terms of having to face racism," he said.

"But a lot of people say the golden era was from 1892 to 1925 because there was no media, no TV but a lot of fight clubs used to pop up, and people went there for entertainment.

"That just wouldn't be possible today."

A former amateur boxer himself, Mr Shapiro trained at the famous Stillman's Gym in New York City - once home to the likes of Jack Dempsey, Georges Carpentier, Primo Carnera, Fred Apostoli and Rocky Marciano - after travelling to Canada to serve in the army as a teenager.

Although a good prospect on fight cards, bad eyesight stopped Mr Shapiro's career in its tracks.

"It was probably for the best," he said.

"I'm not too disappointed because I managed to do a lot of other incredible things with my life, and focus on art and writing, for example."

While at the star-studded gym, he often trained with Tommy 'Hurri-



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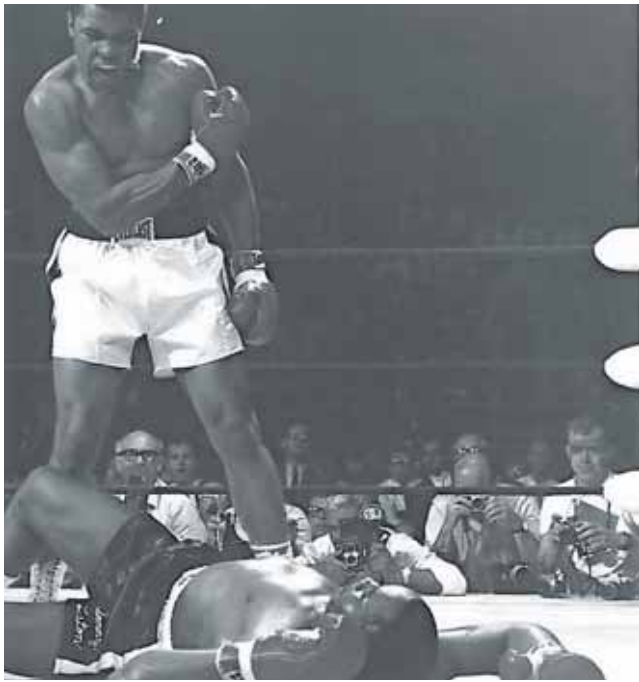
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GREATEST: Cassius Clay aka Muhammad Ali remains a legend

cane' Jackson, a former contender for Marciano's title and who squared up to Floyd Patterson in 1957 in a bid to wrestle the title off him.

He eventually succumbed to a tenth-round technical knock out. Three years later he quit the ring.

"I became quite good friends with Tommy," Mr Shapiro recalls.

"I used to go on the punchbag before him, until he'd come over and say it was his turn – I was wise and de-

cided not to get in his way.

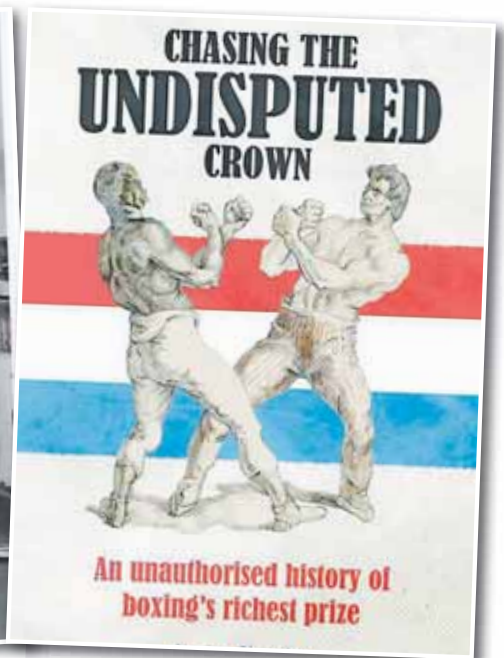
"The trainer, Whitey Bimstein, told me off once because I went in bare-chested, so I had to wear Tommy's t-shirt and it came down to my knees because he was so big.

"Sadly I haven't still got it, I had to give it back to him."

A featherweight himself, Mr Shapiro says that it's not just what goes on inside the ring that's so appealing about heavyweight boxers, but it's



HERO: Joe Louis, above, was title holder from 1937 to 1949 and is one of the all time greats. Right, Mr Shapiro's book



the larger-than-life personalities that help make the sport so compelling.

"Heavyweights are fascinating because it is the ultimate weight, you become the ultimate champion, and the fighters know that," he said.

"Obviously there have been some big personalities over the years and that is definitely part of what makes it so special, and I wanted to try and bring that back to life in the book.

"Even Fury now, people are unhappy with his comments but he's a winner, and he brought the heavy-

weight division back to England.

"Germaine Greer said far worse things about men."

In addition to Fury's success, with David Haye making a comeback earlier this month, and with Anthony Joshua seemingly growing in stature with each knockout victory, the future looks bright for British heavyweight boxing, and Mr Shapiro is supportive of this current crop, even if he has reservations about the direction in which the sport is going.

Despite plenty of travelling over the

years, which involved a bohemian lifestyle in Amsterdam and Paris, Mr Shapiro is now settled in Canterbury, writing two novels and a prize-winning short story.

There he has two daughters, Min and Deborah, and a grandson, Oliver. "He doesn't like the sight of blood," Mr Shapiro said.

"I don't think he's going to be a boxer himself any time soon."

Chasing the Undisputed Crown by Anton Shapiro is available now, by Austin Macauley Publishers.

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Meg tickled pink after 9,200 mile Pacific row completed

Broadstairs 25-year-old was one of the final four to row into Cairns, Australia, in the early hours of Monday morning. The following day, she spoke to KoS...

By Molly Kersey-Law
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BROADSTAIRS' Meg Dyos says she is 'thrilled and overwhelmed' after completing a gruelling 9,200-mile row across the Pacific Ocean.

She joined the third leg of the trip which originally set off from San Francisco in April, before arriving in Australia in the early hours of Monday morning.

Ms Dyos, 25, grew up in Ramsgate and joined the crew in Samoa.

Rowing in their pink 29ft boat, called Doris, they arrived shortly before 1am, after 257 days of enduring storms, enormous waves, sea sickness and the odd attack of flying fish.

Speaking to KoS after landing in Australia, Ms Dyos said: "I don't think there's any amount of training that can prepare you for what we have done."

"We had a psychologist who really helped, he made us work together in a team and really appreciate each other's strengths and weaknesses, and get the best out of each other."

"In the first week when it was pitch black with all these waves crashing it was a real shock to the system. I hadn't really thought about the waves before I got on the boat, which sounds ridiculous."

"Doris kept us safe. We say she was like a floating coconut, she just gets to the top of the waves and rides them. She was our home and we had complete faith in her. We never at any point thought she would let us down."

The four women nosed Doris's faded bow into the Marlin Marina at Cairns to be greeted by their proud families and friends.

"Rowing into the marina we were all so excited and as soon as we saw our families we all broke down in mass emotion," said Ms Dyos.

"My family keep crying. They are relieved that we are not getting back on the boat and we are done with the journey."

After their arrival Laura Penhaul, Natalia Cohen, Emma Mitchell and Ms Dyos hugged each other before joining hands and taking their first unsteady steps onto solid ground for more than three months.

Sitting down for a well-earned beer in front of scores of people who cheered them ashore, the women were all grins as they described their expedition and arrival as "an overwhelming experience".

So how does it feel being back on dry land?

"We are all a bit achy, my calf muscles are really achy now because I'm not used to walking," said Ms Dyos.

"When you have seen only three other faces for the whole 77 days it's an adjustment. We haven't even listened to Adele's new album, we have missed Christmas and New Year, there's a lot to catch up on. It's a little bit crazy."

"We are thrilled and overwhelmed. The reaction that we got and the amount of media we had was just nothing we expected - it was amazing."

There were conflicting emotions as they said goodbye to Doris, whose cramped cabins and salty deck have been their home for three quarters of a year.

Their final few days on the waves were spent negotiating the Great Bar-

rier Reef and dodging dive-bombing boobie birds, and with conditions conspiring against them and supplies dwindling fast they had to dig deep to finish the last few miles.

Writing on their blog last Sunday on their final day of rowing, they said: "The last 8,500 nautical miles don't matter anymore, it is all about these last 20. It's fair to say that with physical exhaustion, sleep deprivation and a lack of savoury food we are being tested to our limits."

"However this is where we draw on our spirit, row hard, row strong, row together."

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DELIGHT: The team steer Doris the boat into port after a gruelling row across the Pacific Ocean which got under way in April from California and finally ended up in Australia on Monday morning.

than planned the expedition has set two world records, the women becoming the first all-female team and the first team of four to row the Pacific.

The journey, split into three legs with resupply stops in Hawaii and Samoa, was completed in its entirety by three of the crew - Ms Penhaul, 31, Ms Cohen, 40, both from London, and Ms Mitchell, 30, from Marlow in Buckinghamshire.

Isabel Burnham, 31, from Saffron Walden near Cambridge, completed the crew for the first leg; Lizanne van Vuuren, 27, a South African who grew up in Newbury, took over for the

second stage, while Ms Dyos manned the oars for the final section.

And Ms Dyos said the experience has brought her closer to the other team members.

"I never really knew the girls before. I got on at Samoa as someone who didn't really have a clue about rowing and wasn't sure what my place would be on the team.

"You see each other at your worst and at your absolute best. It's amazing.

"At one point, after we'd landed, Laura was across the other side of the room from me and it felt like too far."

The expedition got off to a bad start

when water damage to Doris's battery charging system forced them back to California, costing 16 days.

Back on the ocean they rowed continuously as pairs in two-hour shifts, sleeping 90 minutes at a time. Each consumed 5,000 calories a day, devouring freeze-dried meals with a side of protein bars, chocolate, fruit or nuts, washed down with desalinated sea water.

The rowers had to contend with a battering from a tropical storm, waves the size of houses and the heart-stopping approach of a humpback whale that surfaced just yards away.

Drenched by rain and seawater they endured painful sores, but also faced temperatures so hot they cooked a pancake on the deck just from the sun's rays.

Setbacks from El Nino and a notorious stretch of ocean where the winds died away left them weeks behind schedule, and when they reached Samoa they were days from running out of food, but emails and the occasional call from home helped them through the dark times.

With their expedition - filmed for a documentary, *Losing Sight Of Shore* - now over, the Coxless Crew will

concentrate on raising funds for the two charities they are supporting, Walking With The Wounded and Breast Cancer Care.

"The journey is done but it's only just beginning for our fundraising," said Ms Dyos.

"There's donations coming in from left right and centre, which is brilliant, but there's a big gap in between what we've raised so far - around £40,000 - and our target- £250,000. It feels like we are not even a quarter of the way there."

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Film captures father's heroics in bid to fund cure for son's illness

Peter Williams, chairman of the Canterbury Festival, has put together a moving movie about one family coping with their child's diagnosis with a terminal condition, and it's hitting the big screen

By Luke May

luke.may@archant.co.uk

A FILM charting a family's struggle as one of its youngest members suffers with a life-limiting illness is set to premiere at an American film festival next week.

Appearing at the Santa Barbara film festival in California, *The Challenge* tells the story of the Smith family from Surrey, in particular that of Alex Smith as he competes in a gruelling triathlon, pulling or carrying his son Harrison along the whole time.

Harrison, nine, has Duchenne muscular dystrophy, a genetic disorder that shortens life and affects the muscles.

In the documentary, film-maker Peter Williams, who lives in Boughton-under-Blean, near Faversham, follows the family as they cope with living with the disorder, and Mr Smith's efforts to raise awareness, funds and train for the gruelling Challenge Denmark triathlon.

Mr Williams is president of the Canterbury Festival, chair of the Marlowe Theatre Development Trust and a Kent ambassador. He described working with the family as a "privilege".

He said: "Two years ago I was asked to film the family, the mother Donna, father Alex and their two children, Harrison and William.

"They were living with the fact that Harrison suffered from Duchenne muscular dystrophy, and there was terrible emotion when they had to test William as well, as it's a genetic disease."

"It was a great privilege working with the family, and seeing how both mother and father coped with their situation.

"They had a baby boy who seemed perfectly healthy, but by age four they learned that not only was he quite unhealthy, but that he was not going to live for very long.

"Donna rediscovered her love for photography and recording, she explained to me she had to record those

memories.

"Filming Alex's extraordinary burst into action to bring something positive from this dreadful disease was a privilege to watch.

"He described himself as a 'flabby daddy' but he was determined to do a triathlon to raise money for Harrison's charity he had set up; Harrison's Fund."

Mr Smith described himself as a "17-stone, wine-drinking couch potato" but set about transforming his body.

The triathlon involves more than two miles of swimming, 111 miles of cycling and 26 miles running.

During filming, Mr Williams admitted it was sometimes tough to witness scenes of such powerful emotion playing out before him.

"Four athletes went with Alex and Harrison for the triathlon to encourage him," he explains. "No matter how slow he went, he had four blokes with him every step of the way. I found that to be one of the most moving things, even when I talk about it now it moves me."

The emotional journey, which it is hoped will eventually be shown on UK television, was described as Mr Williams as "true reality television".

He explains: "Reality shows aren't reality, they're simply manufactured situations which never quite happen.

"This family's reality is an emotional and moving story of them taking on this difficult situation, and its something anyone can learn from.

"That's the power of television, it has the potential to do so much good"

Mr Smith gained national attention when he released an awareness campaign stating "I'd rather my son had cancer".

But Mr Williams, a freeman of the city of Canterbury, believed that the campaign was never about Mr Smith being seen.

"He was not trying to gain publicity for himself, he was trying to turn the negative into a positive, by raising awareness.

"At the moment it's a race against time, scientists are getting closer and



TOUGH: Father carried, towed and pushed his son in a remarkable triathlon



CHALLENGE: Alex Smith went from self-confessed 'flabby dad' to get fit in order to raise awareness of the rare condition from which his nine-year-old son suffers from. There is no known cure.

which is possible with Duchenne.

"We had so much support – hundreds of people took on race challenges, organised bake sales and mufli [dress down] days at work and helped set up our annual London ball.

"We've gone from turning over £190,000 in our first year to almost three times that in 2014, our third year, with projections to hit the £1 million mark for 2015.

"Our five-year plan is to be a significant part of the £1 billion-plus needed to profoundly change the course for those with Duchenne. The ten-year plan is for me to be made redundant because we will have achieved what we set out to do. That will be the best redundancy any dad could dream of."

The hour-long documentary will premiere at the festival on February 5, and will be shown again on February 6.

Several UK broadcasters are vying for *The Challenge*, produced by Salon Pictures, and the 85 minute feature-length documentary will be seen in cinemas around the country later in the year.

Mr Williams concluded: "DMD mainly affects boys and is passed genetically through the female side of the family.

"Though we are delighted at being chosen as the only UK film among the 20 world premieres from all over the world at this year's festival, the most important thing is to raise awareness about this dreadful and currently fatal disease."



FLOAT: Mr Smith pulled his son along during a gruelling swim

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Town teams up to push itself up and over its neighbouring rivals

As work to unlock the secret to reviving our high streets continues around the country, Tunbridge Wells believes it has found power in a union with diverse organisations now working together

By Tom Pyman

tom.pyman@archant.co.uk

AFTER a successful festive season which saw traders unite to swell the crowds, dozens of businesses in Tunbridge Wells this week launched a new scheme which could prove a blueprint for other towns to replicate.

It follows a Christmas which saw visitors in the town's Royal Victoria Place shopping complex rocket to 1.5million - up 15 per cent on the previous year.

January saw footfall up eight per cent too.

The secret to that success was put down to a co-ordinated push by the local authority, town centre traders and leisure facilities.

Now, building on that, comes Royal Tunbridge Wells Together (RTWT). Launched on Wednesday, it unites various organisations and businesses aimed at trumpeting the spa town as a top destination for retailers, business, leisure and culture.

Over recent months firms ranging from hotels to hairdressers, banks to sculptors have signed up to be part of the project, vowing to fulfil the ambition of giving Tunbridge Wells the competitive edge over local rivals.

And while Tunbridge Wells is bettered only by Canterbury in its appeal to visitors in the county, other town centres will be paying close heed to the project with a view to breathing new life into their high streets.

Nationwide, the shift towards online retailers and out-of-town development has seen traditional retail hubs suffer terribly. But after years of pondering a response, now towns are coming out fighting with co-ordinated campaigns, such as this.

To date, RTWT has raised £250,000 towards the administration costs of the project over the next three years. One key challenge will be the perennial issue of uniting the various strands of the town - most notably the lower end, with the Pantiles, and the upper with Royal Victoria Place.



TOGETHER: Nicky Blanchard, Jane March and Steve Gurney at this week's launch of the initiative designed to enhance the town. Below, entrance to Royal Victoria Place

It wants to make it easier to move around the town, be that on foot, bike or by public transport.

Nicky Blanchard, centre manager of Royal Victoria Place, and co-founder of RTWT, told KoS at the launch at the Assembly Hall Theatre: "This is about Tunbridge Wells and how we can all work together.

"It's not about individual logos or self-promotion, it's about promoting the town and selling Tunbridge Wells to the wider market.

"This kind of thing has never been done here before and it's so important to get that blend of businesses collaborating.

"We can achieve huge things with

this money but we need more - we need the individuality, creativity and passion of small businesses, because without those and our independent shops, we aren't special, we're just like any town.

"This is a beautiful place, I hate leaving Tunbridge Wells, and so we want to share that with as many people as possible, and open up opportunities for everyone."

In exchange for becoming a member of the organisation, which offers benefits such as promotion via social media and involvement in campaigns and networking events, it asks small businesses for a fee of £250 per year.

A town centre manager and administrator will be employed by the organisation from April to work on the delivery of its business plan, with

the office situated in the heart of the town centre in Ely Court.

According to portfolio holder for tourism leisure and economic development, Jane March, the scheme has the full backing of Tunbridge Wells Borough Council (TWBC), which has committed £40,000 toward the initiative.

She told KoS: "The council has been 100 per cent behind this from the go, and we've said this is what we've been waiting for.

"When you see people who have commitment and enthusiasm and you feel that they're going to make it work, you can't help but want to get involved.

"People like these don't come around everyday so you've got to

snap them up when you can.

"One of the hairdressers I was speaking to used to work in London and moved down here, and he said a lot of his clients followed him.

"These people then go and shop and have lunch and spend a whole day in the town, which is fantastic.

"We always hear about people going from Tunbridge Wells to London and it's so refreshing to see it reversed like that and having them come back down here."

Another significant part of its strategy will be to create close links with Kent Police and the town's safe town partnership to minimise street crime and anti-social behaviour, and therefore making it as attractive a destination as possible.

RTWT will engage with TWBC and KCC on consultations regarding planning, transport, parking and licensing, tying in with one of the primary aims of the business plan: to ensure that parking and access issues do not deter footfall or shorten dwell times in the town.

Gavin Tyler, managing partner of law firm Cripps, added: "For me it's really important in terms of joining up the two halves of the town and making all areas accessible to everyone.

"It's not a networking group, or businesses trying to win more business directly, we want to benefit from the town thriving.

"In financial terms, the commitment is small, and it's about lots of small things coming together to create something big."

Leaders also revealed the possibility of Tunbridge Wells becoming a self-sustainable Business Improvement District (BID), such as the one seen in Canterbury.

It sees traders may a levy which goes towards improvements to the city centre.

Cllr March said: "If we can look to become a BID in the future, that's all well and good, but we have to start somewhere, and that's why we're getting this off the ground.

"Right now what excites me is the enthusiasm of different people and that's really wonderful to see."



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Women Seeking

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DANCE partner 65-75 sought by Maureen, Thanet based lady, slim, brown hair, green eyes, seeking dancing, fun and friendship. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 420231

KATIE 35yrs, slender well educated brunette seeks no strings mutual pleasure with gent 40+. Must be discreet, married or single. ACA. Tel: 0906 515 3002 Box 419673

SINGLE slim female, 68, n/s, GSOH, likes cooking, walking etc, seeks male, single, slim 65-70, n/s, with similar interests. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 420091

DISCREET man wanted by married lady for no strings fun. I'm called Sarah and am 37yrs. P's call. ACA. Tel: 0906 515 3006 Box 418167

SLIM female GSOH, 53, likes walking, pub lunches, days out, looking for soul mate, smart appearance, similar interests N/S GSOH, easy going. Text only to Mailbox no: 4762600

JANE, young 41, very broadminded seeks chap any age for discreet no strings fun, any age, no time wasters ACA. Tel: No: 0906 515 3010 Box: 409715

KIND lady, 50s, been broken hearted, seeks kind, genuine man for caring relationship. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 419889

LUCY first time advertiser, 32yrs, tall slim blonde airline worker, seeks discreet gent, any status for casual fling. Looks/age unimportant. Tel: 0906 515 3026 Box: 420237

CHANTELLE, 51/3 light brown/blonde hair, blue eyes, like nights in/out, walks, animals, romance seeks honest guy. Littlehampton. Text only to Mailbox no: 4923883

mydate24

PAT, slim, single, 68, non-smoker, GSOH, likes going for walks etc, seeks male, slim, single, 68-70, non-smoker, clean shaven, GSOH, with similar interests. Canterbury area. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 419081

SOPHIA young 40yrs, married but bored, seeks discreet adult fun, any area, all calls answered. Tel: 0906 515 3018 Box: 413399

MARION, early 70s, young at heart, GSOH, active, likes walking, gardening, meals out, travel, theatre and animals, looking for male friendship to share interests. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 419657

SALLY, 24yrs tall brunette with feminine curves seeks mature older chap, 35+ for discreet fun only, must be experienced. ACA. Tel: 0906 515 3030 Box: 420427

JASMINA, musical lady, husband in the forces and bored alone. 35yrs but loves older men. ACA. Text only Box: 4161836

MARIE, very lonely middle-aged woman, looking for a kind hearted older man, late 70s/early 80s for friendship/companionship. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 418955

KAREN, blue eyed blonde, size 14 with a large bust, 46yrs. Give me a call for some discreet chats. Text only Box: 4053061

RACHEL late 40s, blonde, blue eyes and very voluptuous. Looking for a kind, caring honest man. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 418741

SALLY ANN, care worker for the elderly so loves older men. Im only 29yrs but very mature. Text only Box: 4145714

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ESSEX lady, mid 60's, adaptable, seeking nice male, likes most things. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 418537

AMANDA, 36, tall, slim, busty brunette seeks man, any age, any area, for discreet daytime fun. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 418117

HELEN, widow 58, medium build, 5ft 4ins, blonde, GSOH, likes a chat, days out, looking to start again with someone of similar age. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 376243

FEMALE, 59, GSOH, many interests, seeks caring male for fun friendship maybe more, genuine calls only. Text only to Mailbox No: 4181973

GORGEOUS flower, Ashford Kent, 51, larger lady, large personality, easy going, seeks male who likes dogs, animals for relationship. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 417435

FEMALE easy going, kind, loving, genuine, romantic, car boots, gardening, seeking male with GSOH. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 417603

PAT, 68, young at heart, slim, proud 4' 11" GSOH, N/S, likes walking etc. Whistable area, seeks similar slim easy going male 60-70. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 419081

SUSIE fit, friendly, looking for someone to love and look after me, preferably older, N/S male with own car. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 392537

HAPPY young looking lady, 62, likes socialising, conversation, seeking nice man to share good times with. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 407383

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KATIE, 5ft 5, slim dark hair, very attractive female, likes most things in life and a good laugh, looking for a similar male. Text only to Mailbox No: 4722127

NICE female looking for decent genuine male for friendship to start out with. Text only to Mailbox No: 4710874

BLONDE female, 5ft 1ins, size 12, likes meals out, drinks, nights in, walks, seeks male. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 409025

JAN 63, young at heart, petite, 5ft 2ins, brown hair, blue eyes, GSOH, likes cooking, countryside, travel, days out, seeks easy going male, 60-70. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 416349

ATTRACTIVE lady early 50's, petite, Scandinavian blonde professional, WLTW professional, caring gent, 50-60's for attention and future together. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 416559

RACHEL attractive, blue eyes, blonde, voluptuous, seeking kind, honest, generous kind male. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 418403

JAN 63, young at heart, petite, 5ft 2ins, brown hair, blue eyes, GSOH, likes cooking, countryside, travel, days out, seeks easy going male, 60-70. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 416349

ALISON 39, petite with long brown hair, hazel eyes, very loving, seeking similar male for an uncomplicated relationship. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 416517

ALISON 30, pretty, slim with long brown hair, fit and active seeks fit older male for energetic relationship. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 416497

ATTRACTIVE black, athletic lady, varied interests, seeks similar white, old fashioned, genuine male for relationship. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 416215

Men Seeking

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MATTHEW, five foot eleven, looking for a mature lady for discreet friendship and a few laughs. Dartford area. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 419469

PROFESSIONAL gentleman, just retired, own house, likes holidays, reading, cinema, WLTW similar professional lady. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 420767

HASTINGS male, 51, 5ft10, medium-build, blue eyes, fair hair, fun loving, seeks female, 30-55, for LTR. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 420745

MALE, 60, medium build, gosh, seeks attractive female, under 50, for no strings, discreet, daytime fun. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 420621

CLINT, 37, kind, caring, honest and WLTW someone of any age who is similar and looking for a relationship. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 419951

HEALTHY 61yr old male, N/S, medium build, likes France, cooking, gardening, seeks female, 50-60 for LTR. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 286380

ATTRACTIVE white gent, 48, 56ft, romantic, easy going, GSOH, seeking young lady, 60-75 for quality discreet fun times. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 410025

BROWN eyed white mature, handsome male, seeking black female, 18-50 for discreet no strings adult fun. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 410377

MALE 50, GSOH, looking for soul mate. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 387485

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SIX foot guy, mature, looking for someone special to spend some quality time with. Please leave me a message I would love to hear from you! Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 420163

NEVILLE 5ft 6ins, Caribbean, likes wine, nights in, seeks female to spend the rest of his life with. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 333911

DAVE 46, seeks active female for walking, climbing and outdoor fun. Days out and evenings in. Friendly and GSOH. Text only to Mailbox no: 5338933

PROFESSIONAL gentleman, just retired, own house, loves holidays, WLTW a lady for meals out, and to enjoy each others company. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 419733

SIX foot guy, mature, looking for someone special to spend some quality time with. Please leave me a message I would love to hear from you! Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 420163

HUBERT, lives in Rochester, single, lonely, looking for someone to get together with and make something happen and enjoy the rest of life with! Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 420049

PAUL 52, seeks loving female for exciting times, meals out, weekends away, cosy nights in. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 418077

GARETH handsome 40's pilot, strong tall build, seeks daytime discreet passion with lady 30-65. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 414421

MALE 56, likes good conversation, seeks older lady for discreet friendly fun, 50 plus. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 419201

YOUNG 60yr old male, knows how to treat a lady, seeking special lady to spoil for LTR. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 417909

MICK 50, seeks attractive female for nice times out, genuine calls only. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 417691

PAUL 49 5ft 8ins likes eating/nights in/out seeks loving female for LTR. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 404013

JOHN, 47, six foot two, well-built, h a n d - s o m e n o n - s m o k e r, intelligent and funny, doesn't take himself too seriously, easy to get along with, seeks attractive female, any age, for discreet, adventurous, any time fun. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 419461

NICE looking genuine man would like to meet nice lady any age for company, outings with GSOH. Text only to Mailbox no: 4922399

PAUL GSOH, 5ft 8ins, medium build, seeking Miss Right for LTR to put the spark back into life. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 391970

PROFESSIONAL, romantic male, 44, likes meals out, cinema, music, holidays, seeks female, 30-55 for LTR. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 250195

PAUL 48, 5ft 8ins, GSOH, likes music, cinema, seeks female for fun, friendship and LTR. Tunbridge Wells. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 371985

MALE 51, 5ft 8ins, N/S, GSOH, easygoing, seeks slim female, 18-45 for friendship, maybe more. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 338269

ROCKABILLY guy, seeks rock chick, 25-50 who likes 50's rock music and bands. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 284750

WHITE Knight 59 5'10 tall, OHAC, in shining armour, looking for Damsel in Distress of similar age to share fun & laughter. Text only to Mailbox no: 5073004

CALM, kind and good company, male seeking a lovely lady for good times and fun and loving. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 419733

MIKE Canterbury mature male, seeks single mummy, 28-42, slim-medium build for loving, caring relationship. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 415275

MALE 47, builder, seeks lady for companionship and closeness, age and looks unimportant. Text only to Mailbox no: 4924811

45 year old male, looking for a highly intelligent friendly female for company and evenings in or out, looks or race unimportant. Text only to Mailbox no: 5063649

SUGAR Daddy available! Mature, tall, slim, natural dark hair, seeks lady, age unimportant. Not afraid of commitment. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 418889



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PAUL GSOH, 5ft 8ins, medium build, seeking Miss Right for LTR to put the spark back into life. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 391970

PROFESSIONAL, romantic male, 44, likes meals out, cinema, music, holidays, seeks female, 30-55 for LTR. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 250195

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SUGAR Daddy available! Mature, tall, slim, natural dark hair, seeks lady, age unimportant. Not afraid of commitment. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 418889

MALE 57, seeking honest, reliable, genuine lady for friendship, maybe more. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 418535

50YR old divorced white male, passionate, strong, seeking caring lady for romantic, loving relationship. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 418641

49YR old male, 6ft, well built, seeks female to wine/dine and have fun with. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 390929

48YR old divorced male, 6ft, well built, seeks lady for fun and laughter. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 380789

Gay Seeking

REMEMBER: Calls cost £1.55 per minute plus your phone company's access charge. Texts cost £1.50 per message received.

MALE likes CD, seeking similar male for relationship. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 418513

BI guy heavy build, WLTW assertive adventurous white or Indian guy for mutual pleasure. Text only to Mailbox no: 4321273

SUBMISSIVE bi male, clean and shaven, looking for similar male, n/s, for adult fun, can accommodate. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 420413

SENIOR bi male, 70s, n/s, clean-shaven, living in the Maidstone area, seeking similar bi male, aged 50-60, in the Maidstone area, for myself to give service to. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 420219

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30 April, 2016
Quote: SR4-2-KOS

Join us for a 60s-themed private party break at a super country house hotel in the heart of rural Lincolnshire. Stoke Rochford Hall, near Grantham, is a unique hotel housed in a historic Victorian mansion set in 28 acres of landscaped parkland. You will enjoy live 60s tribute acts both nights and guests have free access to the hotel's leisure club which provides a state-of-the-art gym, heated covered pool, sauna and steam room.

INCLUDED: 2 nights sharing an en-suite bedroom with TV & tea/coffee tray • 2 dinners & 2 breakfasts • Live entertainment both nights • Free use of leisure facilities (indoor pool & gym)



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Entertainment
£10pp deposit

Hotel Piccadilly Bournemouth

Fridays:
19 February & 4 March, 2016
Quote: BO2/3-KOS

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Free drinks
Entertainment
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Showaddywaddy

Mamma Mia & Super 70s Party Pontins Pakefield, Suffolk Coast 8 July, 2016 • Quote: SS7-KOS

Join us at Pontins Pakefield, on the Suffolk coast, for a Super Summer Party - for over 40s only - to make the most of our favourite season. We've lined up a brilliant entertainment showbill featuring 70s themed music and nostalgia, including a live performance by 70s rock-n-rollers Showaddywaddy, a screening of Mamma Mia the movie, plus Abba and Rod Stewart tribute acts. With non-stop entertainment from Friday evening to Sunday evening and free drinks every night, this is one party weekend you won't want to miss.

INCLUDED: 3 Free drinks per person every night - house beers & spirits, wine by the glass, pumped soft drinks & mixers • 3 breakfasts & 3 dinners • Full entertainment programme • 3 nights en-suite chalet - upgrade available



PERFORMER: Gareth Gates will play Willard in musical Footloose

Gareth Gates excited for his return to Orchard Theatre

Molly Kersey-Law spoke to the singer about his role in hit musical Footloose...

SINGER Gareth Gates will be performing in Dartford next month.

Mr Gates shot to fame after becoming runner-up on the first series of talent show Pop Idol, going on to sell more than five million records worldwide.

He will be taking part in musical Footloose, which will be making its way to the Orchard Theatre.

The show - based on the hit 1980s film - features music and dancing.

"I am a big, big fan of the film. It was released the year I was born in 1984. As a child I watched it quite a bit, it's a classic," Mr Gates told KoS.

"My part in the show is a character called Willard, and he's the character who can't dance - which suits me down to the ground.

"He's a cowboy from Beaumont. It's a really small town in the United States where everybody knows eve-

rybody's business. Ren - played by Kevin Bacon in the film - arrives in Beaumont and shakes up the town.

"The vicar and the town council have banned dancing, so Ren tries to get that law lifted so people can be free to express themselves."

Mr Gates has been stepping out of his comfort zone and rehearsing a dance that he will perform in the show.

"Willard is a terrible dancer and Ren teaches him how to dance and at the end I have a dance break of my own - which I am dreading.

"I have training in musical theatre, so I have had to do bits and bobs of dancing. I was on ITV's Dancing on Ice, there's some bits of dancing on that as well, but never as much as this. I think once I know all my dance stuff and I've performed it several times it will become second nature."

He said that Willard is a change from the roles he normally plays.

"Willard is a character in the musical that's quite light-hearted, he's a sort of comedy role, and therefore this is brand new for me," he said.

"I have never really played the 'funny guy' in a show, I have always been quite serious or done panto and played the Prince.

"I am really looking forward to playing something completely different and completely new. I like to challenge myself."

Mr Gates is happy to be returning to the Orchard Theatre to perform.

"I have played there a few times, in Boogie Nights several years ago. I did a big charity do there last year.

"I love the theatre, I have spent quite a bit of time there and I can't wait to be coming back."

He will be starring alongside Luke Baker, who will play Ren, and

Maureen Nolan, who plays Vi Moore.

"Maureen's great, she's such a lovely woman. She's a legend in her own right. It's quite nice to be around the likes of her and the rest of the cast. All the actors also play instruments, we don't have a separate band. They are just a very talented bunch. Working among people like that is incredible."

So what's next for the singer?

"I have been writing my material myself and I will definitely be bringing an album out in the future, it's just when. I am so busy," he said.

"I think my career will be a mixture of both theatre and my own material. I like both sides of the industry."

Footloose will be running from February 8 to 13.

To book, visit www.orchardtheatre.co.uk or call 01322 220000.

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A performance company will bring new work to Folkestone

by Molly Kersey-Law

molly.kersey-law@archant.co.uk

RENOWNED performance company Fevered Sleep will be bringing their new project to Folkestone.

The company is well-known for creating a number of performances, installations, films, books and digital art projects for adults and children.

Their new production - Men and Girls Dance - will be performed on stage at the Folkestone Quarterhouse in April.

The project will see young girls and professional male contemporary dancers perform together.

Fevered Sleep will be holding audition workshops next week, for young girls aged between eight and 11 who have an interest in dance and would like to take part.

The informal workshops will be held at the Folkestone Quarterhouse and led by the artistic directors of Fevered Sleep.

They will be taking place on Saturday (February 6) at 11am, midday and 2.30pm.

The workshops last for about an hour and will result in nine girls

being selected to perform.

The girls will then take part in a two-week long rehearsal period from March 27 to April 9, culminating in three performances.

Speaking about the upcoming performance, a spokesperson for the project explained: "The project brings together two very different groups of performers: adult, male professional contemporary dancers, and eight to 11-year-old girls who dance for fun.

"Men and Girls Dance seeks to dispel some of the social taboos and charged politics around the relationships between men and girls, replacing all that is negative about that relationship with explorations of play, tenderness, empathy, protection and love."

Men and Girls Dance will be performed at the Folkestone Quarterhouse from April 8 to 9.

Performances will be taking place at 2.30pm and 7.30pm.

Tickets to the show are £10 or £8 with concessions.

For more information about the project or to book a place in the audition workshops for your child you can visit www.quarterhouse.co.uk/get-involved.

Alternatively you can call 01303 760750 to book.



DANCE: Audition workshops will be taking place

Burt Bacharach's music

STAGE show Back to Bacharach will be performed at the Leas Cliff Hall, Folkestone, on February 13.

For more details or to book you can visit www.atgtickets.com/folkestone.



Rose-Marie is in Dartford

IRISH singer Rose-Marie will be performing at the Orchard Theatre, Dartford, next week.

Her songs include Boots Are Made For Walking, The Answer and So Lucky.

The show will be taking place on February 7 at 7.30pm.

To book, visit www.orchardtheatre.co.uk.

An award-winning writer

AWARD-WINNING writer Sabrina Mahfouz will be bringing her show, With A Little Bit Of Luck, to the Theatre Royal Margate on April 26 at 7.30pm.

To book, visit www.theatre-royalmargate.com.



Sean Taylor in Sevenoaks

SINGER Sean Taylor will be performing at the Zed Music Cafe in Sevenoaks on February 20.

The performance will be starting at 7.30pm and tickets are £10.

For more details about the performance or to book tickets you can visit www.zedmusiccafe.com or call 01732 465516.



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Tale of a kitten with dream

FAMILY show Pitschi, The Kitten With Dreams, will be performed at the Theatre Royal Margate, on May 30.

The show starts at 2pm.
To book, visit www.theatre-royalmargate.com.



Popular ballet up on stage

BALLET Swan Lake will be performed on stage at the Hazlitt Theatre, Maidstone.

The show will be performed by the Vienna Festival Ballet, featuring a number of costumes and Tchaikovsky's score.

The performance on April 3 at 2pm. Visit www.parkwoodtheatres.co.uk to book.

A new interactive show

INTERACTIVE show Play Dough will be performed at the Folkestone Quarterhouse on February 20.

The show starts at 2.30pm.
To book, visit www.quarterhouse.co.uk.



Music from different eras

VARIETY show That'll Be The Day will be performed at the Assembly Hall Theatre, Tunbridge Wells.

The show features music from the 50s, 60s and 70s, as well as comedy.

It will be taking place on June 17 at 7.30pm.
Call the box office on 01892 530613 to book.

Musical talent coming to the Marlowe Theatre

By Molly Kersey-Law

molly.kersey-law@archant.co.uk

A NUMBER of musical performances will be taking place in Canterbury next month.

Musicians and dancers will be taking to the stage at the Marlowe Theatre throughout February.

The Philharmonia Orchestra will be continuing its season at the Canterbury venue on February 3, performing a concert which features the music of both Mozart and Mahler.

Israeli Lahav Shani - winner of the prestigious Gustav Mahler international conducting competition - will be doubling as both a conductor and piano soloist during the performance.

The first piece will be Mozart's piano concerto No 20 K466.

This piano concerto was a favourite of Beethoven's, and it was featured in the movie Amadeus.

The second half features Mahler's first symphony - a work scored for about 100 musicians, which is a record number for the



Marlowe Theatre's stage.

The Johnny Cash Roadshow will be performed at the venue on February 6.

The tribute show features many of the singer's best-known hits, and it is the only show that has been endorsed by the Cash family.

The production is fronted by singer Clive John, taking audiences from the 1950s to 2002.

The show features a number of screen images from the late performer's life.

Two professional dancers from

BBC's Strictly Come Dancing will be performing at the theatre on February 4 and 5.

Anton Du Beke and Erin Boag will be starring in Anton and Erin: Just Gotta Dance. The show features new choreography and a 25-piece band.

Songs that will be performed during the show include Fever, Night and Day, New York New York and Bye Bye Blackbird.

For more information, visit www.marlowetheatre.com or call the box office on 01227 787787.



DANCERS: Anton and Erin will perform on stage



MUSIC: Lahav Shani will be at the Canterbury venue

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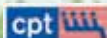
East Anglian Panorama with Guide & Lunch
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30th March 2016 - £62.00



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Book about being supportive and enjoying food

Aine Carlin's latest book, *The New Vegan*, is aiming to make vegan eating accessible to everyone...

"THE amount of dairy I was packing away was shocking to be honest," says Aine Carlin, gravely.

It was this realisation, and the fact that "every single meal had some form of dairy in it", that sent the food writer, former actress and award-winning blogger into a tailspin over what she was putting into her body.

"I opened the fridge one day and had a hard look at what we were eating," she recalls - and six years on, she has no regrets about going vegan.

Understandably so, considering her first book, *Keep It Vegan*, won the 2014 PETA award for best vegan cookbook and the 2015 Gourmand

award for best UK vegan book.

Originally from Derry, Northern Ireland, Ms Carlin had always been interested in food and cooking from scratch, but her vegan transformation took place during a stint living in Chicago.

"Chicago itself had a massive, massive effect on me. They were so far ahead of us in regards to vegetarianism and veganism - I'd never seen vegetarian food like it.

"So when I'd seen the possibilities of what it could be like, it became exciting to me, whereas before, it seemed like you were depriving yourself and it was just a horrible, joyless existence, you know?"

Now based in Cornwall, Ms Carlin sounds the opposite of joyless.



VEGAN: Aine Carlin has noticed a positive impact on her health

Not only has going vegan given her a whole new career avenue, it's had a huge impact on her health and how she feels about herself.

Dairy 'was the first thing to go', she says, but claims there isn't anything she misses from her previous, cheese-tastic diet.

"The problem is people look for products that taste almost exactly the same as the dairy products that they miss," she muses.

"I think you just need to forget about that and just go: 'It's never going to taste like that, but I'm going to enjoy this for what it is'."

The premise of her latest book, *The New Vegan*, is to make vegan eating accessible to everyone.

"I love communal eating; for me it's

all about sharing food, and veganism has a very solitary image. You do it yourself and for yourself, you eat alone and there's something about that that's very depressing for me.

"I wanted to open it out. It's more about sharing your lifestyle and sharing your food, and everyone sitting around a big table and passing bowls of this, that and the other."

"When people think about veganism, they think it's very dogmatic, that you're being told what to eat, that you're being criticised if you slip up, and I want to get away from that mindset, because it's destructive and it doesn't work in the long term," she says passionately.

"It's about being supportive and accepting of everyone and enjoying food."

Jethro due in Chatham

COMEDIAN Jethro will be bringing his stand-up show to Chatham in May.

Jethro: 40 Years The Joker will be performed at the Central Theatre, exploring the 'circus' in the comic storyteller's mind.

The show will be taking place on May 19 at 7.30pm.

Tickets are £20.

For more information about the performance visit www.tickets.medway.gov.uk.

Romance in New York

ANDREW Lloyd Webber and Don Black's musical - Tell Me on a Sunday - will be performed in Bromley.

The show delves into the romantic misadventures of an English girl in New York during the 1980s.

The new production stars Jodie Prenger.

It will be at the Churchill Theatre on June 8 at 7.30pm.

Visit www.atgtickets.com/bromley to book.

The Stranglers in town

BAND The Stranglers will be coming to Folkestone as part of their UK tour.

They will perform old and new material - including a number of songs from their Black and White album.

The band will take to the stage at the Leas Cliff Hall on March 22.

The performance starts at 7pm and tickets are £28.15. To book visit www.atgtickets.com/folkestone.

Bill Bailey in Margate

BILL Bailey will be bringing his new live show to Margate.

The comedian will perform Limboland at the Margate Winter Gardens on June 28.

The show will feature stories of his global travels and a selection of music.

The performance starts at 8pm and tickets are £25.

For more details visit www.margatewintergardens.co.uk.

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Norway has much natural beauty

TRAVEL REVIEW: Norway

by Sarah Marshall

WHEN British astronaut Tim Peake was forced to abandon his first spacewalk, after a life-threatening bubble of water developed in his colleague's helmet, I'm certain he was appreciative of a competent crew.

Unfortunately, I can't say the same about the inept individuals in my own space shuttle, who are furiously fiddling with touchscreens as we hurtle into a solar storm. Alarms fire, systems fail and we hit blackout.

In reality, we haven't left the Earth's atmosphere; we haven't even left the ground. Our adventure is part of Spaceship Aurora, a visitor attraction at the Andoya Space Centre in Norway's Vesterålen archipelago.

Sat directly below the auroral oval, it's the ideal place to study the northern lights. Since 1962, scientists have been launching rockets to determine how space weather impacts our increasingly digital world.

Although just south of popular Tromsø, Vesterålen attracts a fraction of the visitors who descend on the aurora capital; that's largely down to journey time and lack of awareness. Yet a stirring landscape of serrated mountain peaks, an abundance of wildlife and - crucially - few people, make this one of Europe's best kept winter secrets.

Then, of course, there's the promise of aurora activity. I'm visiting in January when it's cold - currently minus 16C, although temperatures are normally much milder as a result of the Gulf Stream - skies are clear and the weather is relatively stable.

It takes 18 hours for solar storms to reach Earth, and aurora predictions for the next few nights look good.

But it's daylight hours that interest



BEAUTY: The northern lights



me most.

For many years, whale watching has been a popular activity in Andenes, a small fishing port at the northern tip of Andoya Island. More recently, increasing numbers of orcas have been arriving from mid-December to February to feed on herring.

"We set up a winter programme four years ago, but it only really took off last season," says Daniele Zannoni, a photographer and marine wildlife

expert who helps run Whalesafari Andenes. Zoologist Mark Carwardine is chartering the company's M/S Reine vessel for his new whale watching and northern lights tours.

Originally built in 1949, the 80-capacity boat was adapted for whale watching purposes in the late nineties. Different level viewing platforms offer flexibility for photographers, and an indoor cabin, toilet facilities and constant supply of tea and bis-

cuits make the two to three hour trips extremely comfortable.

We leave port at 10am as slithers of tangerine light creep across the sky.

In early January, the sun doesn't rise above the horizon; instead the heavens glow from explosive reds to chilling blues, as dawn segues into dusk. Within minutes, a pod of 10 orcas has appeared, their large dagger-like dorsal fins mirroring Andoya's jagged coastline.

TRAVEL FACTS

Sarah Marshall was a guest of the Norwegian Tourist Board.

For more details visit www.visitnorway.com and www.northernnorway.com.

Whale tours start at £78 and can be booked at www.whalesafari.no and www.seasafariandenenes.no.

SAS flies SAS to Andenes via Oslo from London Heathrow from £118 one way.

Visit www.flysas.co.uk.

We're captivated by the display until some new arrivals threaten to steal the show - a pair of humpbacks and even a mighty sperm whale.

I can barely move in the insulation suit necessary for our wet and bumpy excursion, but the opportunities we have to get close to the orcas are exhilarating and unparalleled.

One large male greets me at eye-level before ducking underneath our boat.

By the time we return from our three-hour trip, it's almost dark. That gives us ample time to rest in the grand 1900s fishing house, which Martin rents out, before setting off on a northern lights hunt.

My boyfriend and I have rented a car (equipped with winter tyres), meaning we can explore at our own pace. We buy crampons and climb the snow-covered Ramman Mountain using a steep but easily navigable path.

The location is not listed on maps, but is identifiable by lasers beaming skyward from the Alomar Observatory. The views from the top are astonishing, as we watch swirls of aurora skim the ocean like spinning tops.

It's a natural beauty that defies any scientific or space age explanation.

Film Review by Damon Smith



OUR BRAND IS CRISIS (15, 107 mins) Drama/Comedy

COLD unvarnished truth rarely darkens the doorstep of modern politics. Instead, slick sound bites, unsustainable promises, smear campaigns and scare tactics are employed to herd an apathetic electorate, which gets more excited

about the winner of a reality TV contest than the shifting sands of Westminster.

Our Brand Is Crisis is a sharp and sporadically biting satire of political spin and intrigue, inspired by Rachel Boynton's 2005 documentary of the same title about the impact of American campaign strategists on the outcome of the 2002 Bolivian presidential election.

David Gordon Green's film retains the South American setting, but blurs the line between art and life with fictional characters on both sides of the social and political divide. Scriptwriter Peter Straughan, who penned the 2011 version of Tinker Tailor Soldier Spy, arms his morally corrupt characters with an arsenal of polished one-liners to justify their underhand tactics.

Sandra Bullock and Billy Bob Thornton are a delicious double act at the centre of these machinations,

playing rival spin doctors who will stop at nothing to undermine each other's candidates.

Even the campaign bus rides along winding mountainside roads turn into a potentially fatal game of chicken between the two camps.

"The truth is what I tell the electorate the truth is," boldly declares 'Calamity' Jane Bodine - played by Sandra Bullock - who has turned her back on skulduggery to recover from a nervous breakdown in a cabin in the woods.

Campaign consultants Ben and Nell pay Jane an impromptu visit and offer her a rocky path back to glory.

Pedro Castillo, the unpopular president of Bolivia, is seeking re-election, but he is languishing in fifth place in the polls.

He needs Jane's expertise to turn the political tide in his favour, away from frontrunner Rivera - whose campaign is masterminded by her



arch-nemesis, Pat Candy - played by Billy Bob Thornton.

Jane contends with altitude sickness and her barely concealed contempt for Castillo to formulate the perfect plan of attack: convince the people that Bolivia their country is on the precipice of disaster.

Our Brand Is Crisis hinges on Ms Bullock and she displays impeccable comic timing, whether it's

physical pratfalls like falling down airplane landing steps or tossing verbal grenades at everyone in her eyeline. Mr Thornton is a lip-smacking foil and the actors relish heated exchanges in Straughan's script. The film loses its way in a final act that tugs heartstrings and ignores everything that Jane professes about the mucky business of electioneering.

If you're already 'chitting' your seed potatoes and waiting for those valuable shoots to appear on the tubers before planting out, be aware that this process may be the least of your worries.

While potatoes are generally pretty easy to grow given the right situation, some gardeners end up with rotten, foetid tubers which will need disposing of as soon as they are out of the ground.

The most common problem is potato blight, a disease which causes brown or black patches to appear on young leaves from June onwards. The disease spreads rapidly to stems and finally the plant collapses. Spores are washed down to the tubers, resulting in a reddish brown rot and leaving the potatoes a soggy mass.

If you spot it early enough, you can remove infected leaves straight away to stop it spreading and 'earth up' or mulch rows with a thick layer of straw or hay.

Don't harvest the crop for at least three weeks after removing the diseased foliage to allow time for the potato skins to thicken up and spores on the surface to die.

Don't leave blighted tubers in the ground. They will all need digging up as otherwise the spores will spread again, affecting subsequent crops.

Blight usually hits crops in warm, humid conditions from mid-summer onwards.

It can be prevented by spraying with a copper-based fungicide, Bordeaux mixture, before symptoms first



PROBLEMS: Potato blight is a common concern

Help when the chips are down

appear and repeating the treatment every two weeks. But if blight has already appeared, no amount of fungicide will save your crop.

To reduce the risk of blight, practise crop rotation - don't grow potatoes on the same piece of land more than once every four years - and use deep earthing up to protect the tubers.

Grow early potatoes, which are

lifted before blight appears, or those which show some blight resistance, including 'Sarpo Mira', 'Colleen' and 'Cosmos'. Make sure you always buy certified seed potatoes and don't save your own tubers.

Other potato problems include blackleg, a bacterial disease that causes the leaves to wilt and the stems to blacken. This usually occurs

early in the season and in dry weather. You'll need to destroy affected plants.

Slugs can be a major pain in heavy and wet soil, and there's not a lot you can do about them unless you resort to slug pellets or other common slug deterrents. Early potato varieties may be less affected and if you lift your maincrops early you may be able to

enjoy them before the slugs do.

The first sign of eelworms, tiny worm-like creatures which burrow into the roots of potatoes, is when plants growing close to each other start dying from the base upwards and the leaves yellow. Tiny reddish brown cysts grow out from the roots, which are the females and full of eggs. Affected plants will soon die.



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The simplicity of the layout allows you to walk through the buffet display choosing

from the selection of green salad or mouth-watering starters. You can make as many trips as you like, no matter where you wish to start.

The main course includes a selection of Chinese fried noodles to Singaporean fried rice noodles, Indian curries to Thai green curries and selections of Indian and Chinese vegetarian dishes. You can eat as much as you wish but still pay a fixed price.



DINING: Brasserie on the Bay will offers a selection of starters, main courses and desserts

Treat your valentine to wonderful dining

TREAT your valentine to a wonderful dining experience at the two AA Rosette Brasserie on the Bay in Sandwich Bay.

The Valentine's Day dining offer includes canapes and petit fours, with two courses for £25 and three courses for £32.50.

The starters available include seared scallops and Jerusalem artichoke veloute.

Main courses on offer will be venison, lemon sole and Borlotti bean cassoulet.

Why not stay the night there and wake up to stunning views across the bay or golf course, enjoy a great Kentish breakfast and perhaps a stroll along the beach?

An overnight stay costs £40 per person.

To make a booking call 01304 611118 or email reservations@princesgolfclub.co.uk.

For more information about Brasseries on the Bay and all that they have to offer visit www.princesgolfclub.co.uk.



DINING: Valentine's deal includes four courses and a bottle of wine

Valentine's at a traditional country pub

THE Waggon at Hale is an independent, family-run, traditional country pub situated on Capstone Road, Chatham.

Emma and her team are on hand to offer you a warm and friendly welcome, whether you are looking for somewhere to have a good old pint of real ale, a glass of wine or to dine on their freshly prepared food, which is served all day every day.

Why not enjoy a Valentine's Day meal there?

From February 12 to 14 they will be serving a four-course valentine's meal, with a bottle of wine, for £60 per couple.

Starters include homemade Thai red pepper soup and boxed baked camembert.

Main courses on offer include a baked cod loin, 8oz rump steak and a hazelnut and cauliflower carbonara.

Pre-booking is essential.

Visit www.waggonathale.com for details.

Friendly staff help select perfect gifts



BOUTIQUE: Find the perfect gift for your partner at this award-nominated store

VIBEZ adult boutique in Aylesford is the perfect local choice for all your Valentines needs. VibeZ is a large, classy, boutique-style, award-nominated store which caters for all tastes and is extremely couple orientated.

You will be greeted by the intoxicating scent of fresh flowers and scented candles and the friendly, helpful, experienced staff will make you feel relaxed and at ease as they help you choose the perfect

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Be sure to visit and take advantage of in store promotions and discounts that are not to be missed this Valentine's period.

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What is stopping you from having dental implants? If its pain and suffering... this is for you! FREE for a limited period

Dr Pieter Claassen of Hanover House, a local dental clinic is experiencing high demand for dental implants due to an advanced technique called PRGF which they offer to patients that are having dental implants.

This new system encourages healing at an accelerated rate which means patients are able to go about their normal, everyday life without none or very little any down-time.

Patients travel from all over, demanding this unique treatment which is also being used to help sportsmen and women speed up the healing process following injury. PRGF stands for Plasma Rich Growth Factors, - referred to as accelerated healing by the Hanover House dental implant team.

The Problem

If you are one of the thousands of people suffering from missing or painful teeth you do not need to be reminded that it is very likely you will experience any or all of the following problems.

- Not being able to eat what you want
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- Your confidence has dropped
- You forget the last time you went on a date because you FEAR your little secret will be discovered.
- You don't enjoy food anymore because of the denture covering the roof of your mouth
- You find yourself talking with your hand in front of your mouth to either stop a loose denture from moving or to hide an embarrassing gap
- When did you last smile?
- You no longer join in for photos or when you do you stand at the back
- Your grandchildren comment on your missing teeth
- You suffer from bad posture due to a lack of confidence
- You choose the safe option when going out for a meal...every time!

- You find yourself making excuses to visit the toilet after eating to clean your denture.
- You have bone loss where the denture is pressing on underlying bone
- You can often hear a 'funny sound' when the denture chews against another denture or teeth
- You have as constant fear you will lose or break your dentures
- Dogs love chewing dentures that lies unattended.

The excitement

For most of us suffering from ill-fitting denture, painful or loose teeth, all of the problems can be eliminated through the use of dental implants.

Dr Claassen says, "Most patients normally have dental implants to stabilise loose and uncomfortable dentures or to replace embarrassing missing teeth. Having fixed teeth again means that they can eat and enjoy the food they want and have the confidence to smile in family photos again."

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The system allows our own unique healing factors to help speed up the actual healing process after the procedure. Using the revolutionary PRGF system also increases the success rate.

For the first time ever Hanover House Dental Practice are offering the PRGF system completely free of charge when a dental implant is placed. Normally this amazing new treatment would cost £350.00 but for a limited period only

Dr Claassen is offering it for FREE... Yes, FREE!

Clinical Results

In a study of 1391 dental implants placed the success rate was 99.6% as published in J Oral Implantol. 2006;32(2):72-6 by Anitua EA

Patients who have osteoporosis often receive Biphosphonate treatment to strengthen their bones. Unfortunately, in some cases it can lead to impaired healing of the bone. Accelerated healing (PRGF) is excellent for patients potentially at risk after an extraction or when a dental implant is placed.

The Benefits

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5. Get back your quality of life

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It is so effective that king Juan Carlos of Spain has recently used the same product to increase healing after an operation on his Achilles tendon.

In the several years PRGF have been used in different medical fields there has never been a reported side effect.

What people say

"Pieter worked painstakingly to achieve the perfect finish. The dental implants have given me back my smile and confidence and I no longer have to worry about what I eat"

Mrs. P. Mahoney - Speldhurst

"Having dental implants was well worth the effort and the difference was extraordinary, making it the best decision I ever made. I used to be self-conscious about my teeth. I wouldn't eat in public in case my dentures fell out and I hated how they felt in my mouth. Since having dental implants I am so much happier. I can eat what I want, when I want, including apples and I am much more confident. Even my friends have commented on how happy and relaxed I look."

Stephen Barnham - Tonbridge

Ken, a patients of Dr Claassen at Hanover House Dental Practice says... *"I wasn't certain about going down this route but now feel SMILES better!"* which is evident in his before and after treatment photos.



■ Mr Ken Winch BEFORE Treatment



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Please include your name and address, although these will be withheld in exceptional circumstances, and a daytime phone number for verification (this will not be published). We reserve the right to edit all letters.

Memories of my father's injuries

YOUR article about the First World War last week brought back memories of my father, James Louis Furminger, who served in France with the East Kent Regiment 'The Buffs'.

Three days after one battle, when they went into No Man's Land to collect the dead, my father was found alive, his body embedded with shrapnel and suffering with shell shock, from which he never fully recovered.

As world events, since then, have shown, despite the terrible sacrifice, the war to end all wars did not succeed.

MR Llewellyn,
Folkestone

Remembering Somme dead

I READ with interest the article on the Battle of Somme (KoS, last week).

I was a little puzzled as to your choice of picture, a French military cemetery.

A more fitting choice might have been the Ovillers Commonwealth War Graves Cemetery [CWGC] where 33 men of the Royal West Kent and The Buffs who died from July 1-4 1916 are known to be buried.

There are 2,480 unknown burials here as well which undoubtedly include in their number men of these two regiments.

The next largest concentration is 24 known burials at Dantzig Alley CWGC.

In all, 322 men from these two regiments died on the Somme from July 1-4 1916. Some 204 have no known grave and are remembered on the Thiepval Memorial. Of these 82 died on July 1, 17 on July 3 and 219 on July 3.

I know from my own research at least one of the deaths on July 3 was attributable to wounds received on July 1. The soldier in question, Private John Pearson from West Kingsdown, is buried at Daours CWGC near to the casualty clearing station to which he was evacuated.

Martin Stoneham,
Military historian, West Kingsdown

Could M20 not have extra lane?

WITH regard Operation Stack, there needs to be wider thinking about the problem – ships using other ports does not reduce

LETTER OF THE WEEK



EU debate descends into just 'nonsense'

THE "get out" brigade strike me as if they are looking down a telescope from the wrong end (Letters, last week).

Their distorted view makes the benefits of being a leading member of the EU look small whereas they are large.

When pointing out that European companies get work in the UK they fail to point out that British companies get major contracts in Europe.

They fail to highlight that it is the EU that is taking international corporations to task for not paying taxes in Europe.

They fail to point out the huge challenges of migration, unfair trading and climate change can not be solved at a national level.

What is worse is when the out brigade's arguments crumble they resort to down right nonsense.

Claiming that the EU causes flooding or the financial crisis wouldn't have happened if it wasn't for the EU is pure fantasy.

Sadly by pumping out endless false propaganda the out campaign is not tackling the issues that we will face in the future.

The UK, working together with democratic European countries, as a team, is the best way to protect our interests and way of life.

There is no doubt that the UK IN the EU is the best way to face an uncertain world.

John Vincent
via email

Channel Tunnel traffic.

Possibly the M20 could be widened or adjusted so that the lanes could be flexible so that traffic could continue towards the tunnel on another lane while Stack is in operation on another.

A longer term possibility is keeping lorries on the train and running the train to a station farther away for the lorries to unload, though the height on bridges would have to be checked.

Jean Coulter,
via email

It's loss of foot patrols we miss

WITH reference to Christopher Hudson Gool's comments, among

others, with regard to the possibility of losing routine police car patrolling (Letters, 17.01), I do not think most people would notice one way or the other.

What they will have noticed over the past 30 years or so is the loss of foot patrols. This being policy rather than funding.

S Reeves,
Herne Bay

Phil, you hit the nail on the head

WOW... what a great letter from Phil Grainger (Letters, last week).

As it tells it how it is, I'm surprised it was printed. Thank you Phil, nice to know I'm not the only one who detests the EU and

the pro European apologists more every day. Your letter made our day, thank you.

Michael J Vick,
Sittingbourne

A little Euro verse for you all

OH to be a lawyer if the vote is clear
 To leave the EU cause the things that they do

Pay big bucks and cost dear.

There'll be new treaties and rule changes by the dozen

To negotiate with our neighbours and cousins

Plus companies and states the world wide

May not see things all from our side.

However big the feat is to get all those new treaties

The advantages for some are clear

Sorting the divorce of the century

May leave many in penury

But bring lawyers a happy new year

Jackie France,
Southborough

Social media will kill us all

WHAT a good thing it is that Friends Reunited has now been scrapped because it was such a menace (KoS, last week).

It was the cause of so many marriages breaking up, when old classmates decided to contact one another out of curiosity.

And when they did so, after years of not seeing each other, it became very sordid.

Former friends became enemies when they ended up in bed with one another's husbands or wives causing heartache for everyone.

They shouldn't have yielded to the temptation of social media in the first place.

Social media should be condemned everywhere as it is taking over the world. It should be abolished as soon as possible before it destroys the human race entirely and we cease to exist

Rosie Johnston,
Igham

League tables are just not fair

I AM glad your article on school league tables highlighted the issue in Kent with the selective system which means you cannot compare our non-selectives with others elsewhere.

Tom Murphy,
Tunbridge Wells

KOS 10 GUIDING PRINCIPLES

AS part of our commitment to providing the best service to you, we have produced our 10 guiding principles

Kent on Sunday will:

- 1) Be available in every postcode in Kent.
- 2) Be fair, accurate and balanced.
- 3) Be written in clear, concise English.

4) Not be overly sensational.

5) Have a sense of humour.

6) Have an easily understood division between news, comment and advertising.

7) Seek to celebrate as well as constructively criticise.

8) Highlight topical issues of concern to

people living in the county.

9) Spotlight individual cases which raise broader concerns.

10) Champion causes that it feels are important to the well-being of the county and its people.

We hope you enjoy Kent on Sunday.



**Kingsgate Bay,
Broadstairs**
by **Rob Marks**

To see your photograph printed, email editorial@kosmedia.co.uk, or post it to **Archant KOS Media, Images of Kent, Kent House, 81 Station Road, Ashford, TN23 1PP**. Be sure to include your name, address and a contact telephone number. Unfortunately we cannot return any prints, and please do not send negatives. Note: all digital images must be no less than 200dpi. Please note, our relationship with MyFerryLink has now come to an end. We thank them for their long support.

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The mpg figures quoted are sourced from official EU-regulated test results obtained through laboratory testing. These are provided for comparability purposes only and may not reflect your actual driving results.

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By Steve Loader
editorial@kosmedia.co.uk

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motoring reviews in...

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CITY SPECIAL:
the Look Up
offers style
and value



POWER PLAY: the Scirocco GTS delivers style and space

VW goes for special appeal

BRAND UPDATE: German marque has enjoyed spectacular success with special edition plays and has started 2016 by dealing another tempting hand

VOLKSWAGEN has a habit of launching temptingly priced and well-spec'd special editions – the Golf Match being a perennial favourite.

So perhaps we shouldn't be surprised by the latest batch of 'specials' from the German giant, nor suspicious that this might signal desperation after last year's diesel emissions scandal.

After all, it's not as if VW's UK sales faltered much in the aftermath of that furor: the brand ended up boosting sales by more than four per cent last year.

One of the line-up's favourites is the VW Up, my pick of the city car sector and currently available as a Look Up special edition based on the popular Move Up model, but costing just £70 more at £9,995.

It's in three-door format and while it has the lower output 60PS (59bhp) version of the Up's universal three-cylinder 1.0-litre petrol engine, you'd be hard-pressed to notice much difference to the 75PS version.

The Look Up also comes with sporty 15-inch alloys and unique trimming inside and out, plus distinctive yellow, red or white paint jobs.

At the other extreme is what I consider one of VW's best current cars, the CC four-door coupe and available in two special Black edition models: the GT Black Edition and CC R-Line Black Edition.

PITCH BLACK: VW offers a choice of Black Edition CC models



Both get distinctive black front grille (naturally) electric tilting sunroof, and their own 18-inch alloy designs, but the interior also gets extra: 'Carbon Nappa' leather upholstery with carbon fibre-style decorative inserts on front and side doors, plus black piano inserts in the centre console.

They are priced from £29,150 – just £575 more than the current CC GT and R-Line models.

The most potent of VW's seasonal specials though is the highly spec'd 220PS (218bhp) Scirocco GTS (from £28,195) available as a manual or DSG auto – both deliver 0-60mpg in 6.5 seconds.

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TOTAL	£3,248.75
CASH PRICE OF VEHICLE	£12,995.00
TOTAL AMOUNT OF CREDIT	£9,746.25
INTEREST CHARGES	£1,472.33
TOTAL AMOUNT PAYABLE	£14,467.33
OPTIONAL FINAL PAYMENT	£4,377.50
DURATION OF AGREEMENT	37 MONTHS
APR REPRESENTATIVE	APR 6.9%
INTEREST FIXED	3.55% PA
EXCESS MILEAGE CHARGE PER MILE	14.9P
ANNUAL MILEAGE	10,000



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HYUNDAI DEPOSIT CONTRIBUTION	NIL
TOTAL	£1,998.75
CASH PRICE OF VEHICLE	£7,995
TOTAL AMOUNT OF CREDIT	£5,996.25
INTEREST CHARGES	£923.22
TOTAL AMOUNT PAYABLE	£8,918.22
OPTIONAL FINAL PAYMENT	£2,868.75
DURATION OF AGREEMENT	37 MONTHS
APR REPRESENTATIVE	APR 6.9%
INTEREST FIXED	3.55% PA
EXCESS MILEAGE CHARGE PER MILE	14.9P
ANNUAL MILEAGE	10,000



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HYUNDAI DEPOSIT
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£2,030

MONTHLY PAYMENTS OF	£150.43
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HYUNDAI DEPOSIT CONTRIBUTION	£250.00
TOTAL	£2,748.75
CASH PRICE OF VEHICLE	£10,995.00
TOTAL AMOUNT OF CREDIT	£8,246.25
INTEREST CHARGES	£1,286.73
TOTAL AMOUNT PAYABLE	£12,281.73
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A big SUV for those who hate them

Volvo has created another big and versatile seven-seater that's good to drive and doesn't offend other road users, writes **Steve Loader...**

ARE big SUVs/4x4s pointless? Of course they appeal to those living out in the sticks and needing something to get them out of a bind, or tow a trailer or horsebox.

But let's be honest, most owners are townies who buy them for swank and the lofty oh-so-superior driving position. They certainly don't buy them to enjoy driving, at least not the big models: cornering can feel like a fairground ride.

And yet, I always respected the Volvo XC90 and its buyers. The original lasted 12 years on the market: impressive when a car's production life is typically 5-7 years, but not so surprising when a car just hits the spot so well.

Spacious yet nimble and able to seat seven, it was also relatively affordable – some say Volvo unwittingly under-priced it.

Unlike some it was also never marketed as a rapid response wagon for a SWAT team, though hot versions were available – if you looked hard enough – so seemed to offend nobody.

But, after a long reign, it finally gave way to a worthy successor last year.



Squarer in style, enhanced by what Volvo calls 'Thor's Hammer' headlights, the new XC90 has presence and the more upright look underlines the pragmatic space efficiency of the interior, notably for the third row of seats, catering for adults up to five feet seven in height. Folding all five rear seats – fully

flat, unlike some SUVs – also creates a huge IKEA-friendly 1,899-litre load area, so the big Swede can be both luxury motor and workhorse. Amazingly, this is helped by thinner seat cushions that somehow surpass the benchmark comfort of the old XC90 and enhance Volvo's formidable reputation in this field.



Volvo XC90 2.0 D5 AWD Inscription 4wd Auto

Price:	from £46,250
Driving appeal:	★★★★★
Image:	★★★★★
Space:	★★★★★
Value:	★★★★
Running costs:	★★★★
How green?:	★★★
Best rival:	Range Rover Sport

petrol or diesel units, offered with various turbo and supercharging packages, with hybrid options arriving soon.

Fact is though, the Volvo uses such light yet high tensile construction that it doesn't need a big lump under that imposing bonnet: there is a pleasing nimbleness and, while there is some body lean on the bends, it is not onerous and you soon forget the XC90's bulk – even on more challenging roads.

And you marvel at the ease of driving – my wife didn't want to return the test car – and at the high levels of refinement, excellent streamlined cabin design, and thoughtful arrangement of stowage and controls – including a big user-friendly iPad-style touchscreen

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Fuel consumption figures for Fiat 500X Range in mpg (l/100km): Urban 32.5 (8.7) – 61.4 (4.6); Extra Urban 49.6 (5.7) – 74.3 (3.8); Combined 42.2 (6.7) – 68.9 (4.1). CO₂ emissions 157 – 107 g/km. Fuel consumption and CO₂ figures based on standard EU tests for comparative purposes and may not reflect real driving results. *Customer deposit is £3,493. Fiat deposit contribution is £500. Total deposit is £3,993. Optional Final Payment is £6,745. Contract Term is 24 months. Promotion available on new Fiat 500X Pop 1.8 E-Torq registered between 5th January and 31st March 2016. Fiat Deposit Contribution only available in conjunction with Fiat i-Deal PCP. With Fiat i-Deal you have the option to return the vehicle and not pay the final payment, subject to the vehicle not having exceeded an agreed annual mileage (a charge of 5p per mile for exceeding 10,000 miles per annum in this example) and being in good condition. Finance subject to status. Guarantees may be required. Terms and Conditions apply. At participating Dealers only. Fiat Financial Services, PO BOX 4488, Slough, SL1 0RW. We work with a number of creditors including Fiat Financial Services.

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SMALL ADS

Bull hails belief of Margate players

The Blues' form peaked with a win over Ebbsfleet last week

Football

By Tom Pyman

tom.pyman@archant.co.uk

MARGATE boss Nikki Bull is refusing to take any credit for his side's remarkable transformation, instead claiming the players deserve all the plaudits.

The Blues were languishing in the relegation zone when Bull took over following the sacking of former manager Terry Brown, but a sensational set of results has seen them shoot up the table, with victory over league leaders Ebbsfleet United last weekend proving the pinnacle.

And Bull claims he has total faith in his current crop, with no plans for a last-minute trolley dash as the January transfer window draws to a close.

He told KoS: "It's the players that step over that white line and perform and they deserve all the credit.

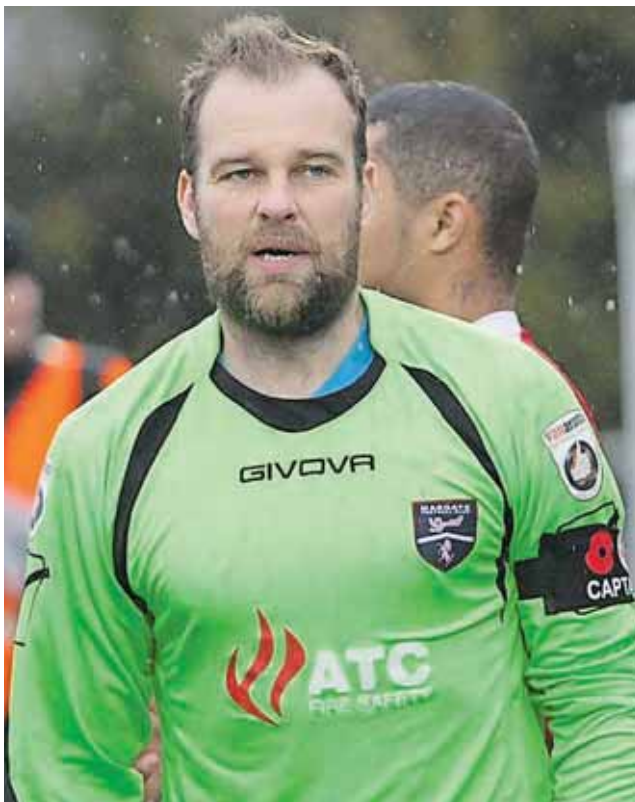
"All I've tried to do is instil some confidence and they've taken that on board, shown real belief and they're getting the results they deserve.

"Apart from the goalkeeper to replace myself, I haven't brought anybody in and I don't intend to unless we come down with some crippling injuries.

"I don't see any point in wasting money like that."

When quizzed on what his side can achieve for the remainder of the campaign, Bull was quick to play down suggestions of a late promotion push, and insisted the Gate will take one game at a time.

"At the moment we're only a few points off the play-off places," he said.



FORM: Nikki Bull says the players deserve all the credit for Margate's fine form

"But I think the table has a bit of an unrealistic look to it because everyone has so many games in hand on us, so I see it as more like being 12 or 13 points off.

"We've shown we need to be taken seriously but I'm wary of staying clear of the bottom three because

that's where we started so for now we just need to take each game as it comes."

Margate's fine form has coincided with an agreement made in principle with Thanet District Council to lease its home ground at Hartsdown Park for another 25 years.

Frost settles as Fazakerley departs Welling

Football

WELLING United have appointed Dean Frost as their new manager following the sacking of Loui Fazakerley earlier this week.

A former member of the club's backroom staff, Frost met the squad on Tuesday morning and took his first training session ahead of Saturday's trip to Halifax Town.

Frost said: "I'm delighted to have been offered the job, it's one that was very difficult to turn down.

"The club, players and most importantly supporters, want to remain in the division and that's a challenge that I'm looking forward to, and one that me and my staff believe we can achieve."

Fazakerley was sacked following a



WELLING: Park View Road

poor run of form that saw the club go 10 league games without a win and drop into the relegation zone.

Operations manager Barry Hobbins said: "We're disappointed that we've had to make a change but we felt we had to give ourselves the best chance possible of staying up.

"We enjoyed a good run in the FA Cup this season but the league is our priority and we need to get back to winning ways very quickly.

"Loui has been a fantastic servant to the club, both as a player over a number of seasons and as a manager. We wish him all the best in the future."

The move was also supported by the club's fans, as Matthew Mein, chairman of Welling United Supporters Association, said: "We're sad to see Loui go but we reached a bit of a crossroads and I think we'd stretched things out as long as we could."

Sport Shorts

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Sam Billings signs Kent contract extension

WICKETKEEPER-BATSMAN Sam Billings has signed a contract extension with Kent.

After impressing for Kent Spitfires and England Lions in white-ball cricket, the academy graduate made his international breakthrough last year.

Billings, 24, won the Spitfire Player of the Year award in 2014 and will now wear the number seven shirt for Kent as he does for his country.

Chief executive Jamie Clifford said: "We're delighted that Sam has committed his future to the club.

"It is pleasing that we now have a solid core of players on longer term contracts and I think it points to an exciting future.

"With players vying for international honours, it is a competitive environment and one that is hungry for success.

"I know that our supporters have enjoyed watching Sam's career develop and it will be exciting to see just how far he and others can go."

Billings is currently on tour with England Lions in Dubai.



DEAL: Sam Billings



HOME: Priestfield welcomes new full-back

Gillingham bring in Chicksen on loan

GILLINGHAM have bolstered their defensive options with the loan signing of Adam Chicksen.

The full-back joins from Championship outfit Brighton and Hove Albion until February 23 and will look to find regular football in Medway, as the Gills continue their push for promotion from League One.

Chicksen, 24, returns to Priestfield

for a second spell having played for the club on four occasions last season.

Boss Justin Edinburgh said: "We are delighted to have signed Adam, he is somebody we have kept an eye on for a while and are pleased we had the opportunity to bring him here.

"He will add quality to our squad, he's a strong defender and we look forward to working with him."

Marsh and Crawford join Dover

DOVER Athletic's bid for promotion from the National League has been boosted by the signing of two new strikers.

The club have brought Tyrone Marsh, 22, and Harry Crawford, 24, to Crabble to bolster Chris Kinnear's attacking options as they enter the business end of the season, with their eyes firmly set on a spot in the play-offs.

Marsh joins from Torquay United on an eighteen-month deal after spells at Oxford United, Aylesbury United, Staines Town, Welling United and Ebbsfleet United, scoring goals wherever he went.

Crawford, who spent time at Dover on loan back in 2010, also joins, and scored against the Whites for Boreham Wood at Crabble in August.

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